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30,000 Agricultural Workers Rally in Nicaragua

***Call for
Deepening
Revolution
in the
Countryside***



PAKISTAN

**GENERAL ZIA
A SHAKY
U.S. ALLY**

CANADA

**LABOR PARTY
MAKES BIG
ELECTION GAINS**

United Secretariat Declaration on Afghanistan

Canada: Union Effort Nets Big Gains for NDP

By Stu Singer

MONTREAL—Canada's labor party, the New Democratic Party (NDP), scored its biggest election success ever in the February 18 federal election. The NDP won thirty-two seats and received 18.6 percent of the vote. This is an increase of five seats from the last Parliament.

The election was won by the Liberal Party, headed by Pierre Trudeau who will be the next prime minister. The Liberals won an absolute majority of seats, 148 of 281.

The NDP vote was largest in the western provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and British Columbia. The number of seats remained the same in Ontario.

In Quebec, where the NDP has been traditionally weak, the party vote went from 5 percent in the last election to just under 10 percent this time.

The NDP campaign had two separate elements. One was the official party campaign featuring party leader Ed Broadbent. Broadbent's speeches focused on opposition to the austerity measures of both the Liberals and the Conservatives and placed a big emphasis on Canadian nationalist rhetoric: more control by both Canadian government and business over the economy.

Key features of the campaign were defense of the nationalized oil company, Petrocan, and defense of the Medicare program.

The other part of the effort for the NDP was the "parallel campaign" organized by the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC), the union federation. The entire staff and resources of the CLC were thrown into organizing support for the NDP campaign among union members throughout the country.

This campaign involved training sessions for thousands of union stewards, distribution of millions of pieces of campaign literature on the shop floor, and innumerable organized discussions among workers about the election.

The "Cost-of-Living Calculator," a small leaflet that enabled each worker to compute the effect of inflation on his or her income for the next year, was undoubtedly the most effective piece of literature distributed in this campaign.

There was little news coverage of the CLC effort, but it was the most significant development in English Canada in this election. The Quebec unions did not carry out such a parallel campaign.

In Hamilton, the steel-making center an hour's drive southwest of Toronto, I talked

to unionists involved in the parallel campaign a few days before the election.

One of them was Larry Wagg, the education director of the CLC who helped organize the effort in Hamilton. The NDP won a seat there as a result of that effort.

Wagg said, "Win, lose, or draw we come out of this stronger. We have an ongoing campaign. We have located people in the unions who are interested in politics and the NDP. Finding these new people will have a significant effect on the leadership of the local unions. There was an assumption in many unions that politics should not be discussed. But we've learned that the membership may be ahead of the leadership."

The strength and appeal of the NDP is that it is based on the unions. The party is financed and directed primarily by the Canadian labor movement. In this, it is qualitatively different from either the Liberals or Conservatives in Canada.

But the NDP campaign this time, as in the past, was weakened by its program. In

contradiction to its working-class base, the NDP did not offer solutions for the immense problems facing Canadian workers.

Broadbent joined with Conservative leader Joe Clark and Trudeau in backing Carter's war threats in the Middle East—a stance that drew immense opposition from some other NDP leaders.

Nevertheless, the NDP represents a historic break with capitalist politics by the Canadian working class.

Before the election, the *Financial Post* published a survey of Canadian business leaders. They were divided in supporting the Liberals and Conservatives but not a single one supported the NDP.

On election night, leaders of the three parties were interviewed on TV. The Liberals and Conservatives were in meeting rooms with generally well-dressed campaign supporters waving the usual campaign signs. It was indistinguishable from similar scenes in the U.S.

Broadbent's meeting was in the United Auto Workers hall in Oshawa, where there is a large General Motors plant. On the wall behind him was a sign, "UAW Local 222 supports the New Democratic Party."

The cameras panned the casually dressed crowd, obviously a majority auto workers.

Broadbent spoke, stressing the big gains for the NDP in the election. He then congratulated Trudeau for his victory. The crowd booed long and hard. □

Carter Sends Arms to Afghan Rightists

By Ernest Harsch

The Carter administration has decided to lift a small corner of the veil of secrecy surrounding its support for the Afghan counterrevolutionary forces.

A White House official announced on February 15 that Washington had been supplying light infantry weapons to the Afghan guerrillas since mid-January. The next day another White House official said that he would "neither confirm nor deny" the announcement—a way of indirectly hinting at its accuracy, without officially taking responsibility for it.

"The arms being sent to Afghan insurgent groups," David Binder reported in the February 16 *New York Times*, "are largely of Soviet design, including Kalashnikov AK-47 automatic rifles, according to the official, who declined to specify whether the weapons were manufactured in the Soviet bloc or in China. Nor would they confirm reports that some of the arms might have come from stocks of Soviet weapons acquired by Egypt."

The decision to begin the support operation was made by the Special Coordination Committee of the National Security Council, chaired by Zbigniew Brzezinski. It was then approved by Carter himself.

The Central Intelligence Agency was assigned to carry out the gun-running

mission. According to Binder, it was the CIA's first operation "of this nature and magnitude since the Angolan civil war ended in 1976."

The arms are being shipped to the terrorist groups through Pakistan, which borders on Afghanistan and out of which many of the rightist forces operate.

Two days before the White House announcement, the Egyptian Defense Ministry declared that it had begun to train and arm some of the Afghan guerrillas as well. The Stalinist regime in Peking, which has lined up with American imperialism against the Afghan revolution and the Soviet intervention in that country, has also provided some assistance to the counterrevolutionaries.

Carter's backing for the rightist guerrillas did not begin in mid-January. It actually dates to the early days of the Afghan revolution, following the overthrow of the Daud regime in April 1978 and especially since the beginning of the new regime's land reform program in early 1979.

However, Washington's greater openness about its support to the guerrillas—and its direct shipment of arms to them—does represent a significant escalation of imperialist intervention against the Afghan revolution. □

PRT Wins Legal Status in Peru

By Will Reissner

In a victory for the Peruvian working class, all the left-wing parties that make up the Revolutionary Left Alliance (ARI), which is running Hugo Blanco for president of Peru in the May 18 elections, have succeeded in winning ballot status after it was initially denied them.

Hugo Blanco, who is a leader of the Trotskyist Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), began a hunger strike and sit-in February 4 at the headquarters of the National Elections Court in Lima. Blanco was demanding an end to the regime's slanders against the PRT; legalization of the PRT and the POMR (associated with the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International), both of which had fulfilled all the military government's requirements for ballot status but had still been denied a place; and recognition of all political and voting rights of illiterates.

The PRT and POMR had each collected some 60,000 signatures (40,000 were required). But the court ruled that their signatures included too many illiterates. Illiterates, who represent 35 percent of the population, were granted the right to vote by the Constituent Assembly last year.

Following popular pressure, the National Elections Court then gave all parties six more days to collect additional signatures. Despite the short period, the PRT turned in 31,153 new signatures and the POMR submitted about 15,000. Three other groups in ARI also submitted additional signatures.

As the Peruvian weekly *Marka* noted, "the struggle against the fraud, primarily led by the revolutionary left, has received the solid backing of the people. This has made it possible to collect the signatures rapidly. In this way the short campaign turned into another demonstration of the rejection of the military dictatorship's antidemocratic policy."

Once the court accepted the additional signatures, Blanco ended his hunger strike. □

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30,000 Campesinos Join ATC March in Managua

By Fred Murphy

MANAGUA—In an impressive display of the growing strength of the FSLN-led mass organizations in Nicaragua, more than 30,000 peasants and agricultural laborers from across the country marched and rallied here February 17. It was the first time in Nicaraguan history that working people from the countryside demonstrated in the capital under their own banners.

Organized by the Rural Workers Association (ATC), the action launched a week of activities commemorating the February 21, 1934, assassination of Augusto César Sandino, who launched Nicaragua's battle against U.S. imperialist domination more than half a century ago. In expressing their support for the Sandinista-led government and raising their own demands aimed at deepening the revolution in the countryside, the campesinos lent fresh relevance to the quotation from Sandino that is becoming a central theme of the revolution:

"Only the workers and campesinos will go all the way; only their organized forces will bring about the victory."

The march was led off by a spirited contingent of Indians from the remote town of Waspam, on the Honduran border in the Atlantic coast region. They bore signs and banners with slogans written in their native language, Miskito. Some compañeros from Waspam told me that under the Somoza dictatorship they had been forced to migrate to Honduras to find work during harvest season. Now, however, they look forward to steady jobs in Nicaragua owing to the agrarian reform and the government's plans to develop the Atlantic coast region.

No highways connect Waspam with Managua; the ATC contingent from there was brought on a plane by the Sandinista Air Force.

Campesinos from all parts of the country took part in the Managua demonstration. Placards were visible from areas that are famous in Nicaragua both for Sandino's war against the U.S. marines in the 1920s and 1930s, and for the early guerrilla fronts opened up by the FSLN in the 1960s—San Juan de Río Coco, Quilalí, Paiwás, Wiwili, Pantasma. An ATC member from Pantasma in the northern province of Jinotega told me his contingent had gotten up at 4 a.m. to board the ten flatbed trucks that brought them to the capital.

Many of the marchers bore machetes—the sharp, steel-bladed tools that have

historically doubled as self-defense weapons in Central American peasant struggles. The machetes were brandished in the air as the demonstrators joined in the chants led by ATC activists.

The ATC focused the march and rally on mobilizing peasants and farm laborers around a "Plan of Struggle" announced February 7. Most of the chants, placards, and banners centered on the demands raised in the new ATC plan.

At the rally in the Plaza of the Revolution, ATC general secretary Edgardo García explained the plan.

"In the first place," García said, "we demand that the lands intervened by INRA [Nicaraguan Institute of Agrarian Reform] that could not be confiscated now pass over to the Peoples Property Sector and that not a single inch of land be returned" to the big landowners.

García was referring to the growing number of big farms that have been placed under INRA administration owing to the refusal of their private owners to put them into production or to meet the new government's standards on wages, working conditions, and social benefits for farm laborers. The landlords have been clamoring to get back the intervened estates, but the campesino demonstrators clearly made

known their total opposition to returning the land.

The government's attitude on this question was explained at the ATC rally by Minister of Agricultural Development and INRA director Jaime Wheelock, and by government junta member Sergio Ramírez.

"The revolution is not only not going to return a single inch of land," Wheelock declared, "it is not going to return a single speck of soil."

Ramírez reaffirmed Wheelock's pledge and said a decree would be issued shortly to back it up.

Other demands included in the ATC's Plan of Struggle include a total revision of the old regime's Labor Code—left in effect provisionally by the new government—with the participation of the ATC and the trade unions; a halt to firings and harassment of ATC organizers on private estates; greater participation by farm workers in the administration of INRA's State Farms with full knowledge and discussion of production plans, income, and expenses; and further improvements in food, housing, health care, and education on both state and private farms.

"We want it to be quite clear," García added, "that any coffee grower or other producer that doesn't want to carry out the

Discover Third Arms Cache Linked to MAP

MANAGUA—Sandinista security personnel announced February 19 the discovery of a third cache of arms said to belong to the armed wing of the ultra-left Stalinist organization Peoples Action Movement (MAP).*

State Security chief Lenín Cerna displayed the cache to reporters at the house in eastern Managua where the weapons were found buried. Clearly visible on the stocks of some of the shotguns and hunting rifles was the acronym "MILPAS," which stands for Anti-Somoza People's Militias, the MAP's armed unit.

The discovery of similar arms caches here in the capital had been announced on February 2 and February 11 by State Security.

Unauthorized possession of arms violates a decree adopted by the revolutionary government last October that had

called on all citizens not belonging to militia units to turn in their arms to the Sandinista People's Army (EPS). At that time the MAP said that the MILPAS had been disbanded after the victory of the insurrection against Somoza.

The EPS issued receipts for all arms turned in last October and says it has no records of having given receipts to MILPAS leaders. The Sandinistas have asked the MAP to produce such receipts, but there have been no reports of their having done so.

A number of MAP members have been jailed and are reportedly awaiting trial in connection with the arms caches. □

*The MAP exercised predominant influence over the daily *El Pueblo*, which was closed down by the Nicaraguan government January 23. See *IP/I* February 25, page 176 and February 18, page 135.

harvest or that boycotts production will be denounced by us as an enemy of the revolution and that with our own efforts we will get the production moving that they want to sabotage."

The ATC has already stepped in to complete the coffee harvest on a number of private plantations where the owners try to halt it and lay off workers. The ATC has also begun putting special stress on organizing peasants who farm their own small or medium sized plots of land.

The Plan of Struggle calls for cancellation of all the debts owed by small farmers to the banks that are now state owned; the eradication of bureaucratic practices by

some INRA and bank functionaries who are supposed to be providing technical and financial assistance to the peasants; and sharp reductions in the interest rates charged small farmers on the new loans the state is providing them.

"Fourteen percent no, five percent yes!" was an especially popular chant on the February 17 march.

It was clear from the demonstration's tone and spirit, from conversations with participants, and from the speeches by García, Wheelock, and Ramírez that the campesinos and the government view each other as allies in the continuing struggle

against the remaining big landlords and the heritage of imperialist-imposed oppression in the countryside. It was also clear that the FSLN considers the independent organization and mobilization of the workers and peasants as the best guarantee that this struggle will be victorious.

"It was you, the campesinos, who suffered the most from Somoza's repression during the twenty years of Sandinista struggle," FSLN Commander Wheelock told the February 17 rally. "We know your demands are just and this march gives us confidence to advance, to make further transformations. . . ." □

Washington's Hand Behind Turbay?

Colombia's 'War Fever' Against Nicaragua

By Will Reissner

The United States government has been trying in a number of ways to stem the rising revolutionary tide in Central America and the Caribbean, which represents a major challenge to U.S. political and economic control there. Washington considers the region vital to U.S. imperialist interests.

The victory of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, the growing possibility that El Salvador and Guatemala will become "new Nicaraguas," and the close ties that Cuba has developed with Grenada, Jamaica, and other Caribbean countries have led the U.S. government to step up its efforts to isolate the Nicaraguan and Cuban revolutions.

Washington has been attempting to enlist other governments in the area, particularly Venezuela and Colombia, in this effort.

The Social Christian government of President Luis Herrera Campins in Vene-

zuela is openly hostile to Cuba. There are indications that Herrera plans to break off diplomatic relations with Havana and is trying to get other Andean Pact countries to do the same.

President Julio César Turbay Ayala of Colombia is also actively participating in Washington's efforts. Turbay worked closely with the U.S. government in helping prevent Cuba from getting a seat on the United Nations Security Council late last year. Since then, the Colombian ambassador to Cuba, who was known as a proponent of closer relations between the two countries, has been withdrawn and no successor has been named.

The Colombian government is also pulling out the stops to whip up a major chauvinist campaign against both Nicaragua and Cuba over an issue that has received little attention outside the region—the question of sovereignty over the San Andrés archipelago.

The San Andrés archipelago—made up of the islands of San Andrés and Providencia and the keys of Roncador, Quitasueño, and Serrana—lies off the Nicaraguan Atlantic coast. Colombia has controlled the islands since 1928 and the keys since 1972.

On December 19 the Sandinista-led government of Nicaragua announced that it was extending its territorial waters to a 200 mile limit. The islands and keys all lie within that limit.

On February 4 the Nicaraguan government cancelled the 1928 treaty between Nicaragua and Colombia that ceded control over San Andrés and Providencia islands to Colombia. The Nicaraguan statement noted that the treaty had been signed at a time when Nicaragua was under total military occupation by the United States. It pointed out that it was a "treaty imposed by a world power on a weak and small country."

Colombian control over the keys is based on a 1972 treaty with Washington, which the U.S. Senate still has not ratified, wherein the U.S. government turned over control of the keys while retaining rights to maintain facilities on them.

In its declaration nullifying the 1928 treaty, the Nicaraguan government stated that "the door remains open" for discussions between the two countries on the fate of the archipelago. It has repeated this point many times since.

Instead, the Turbay government recalled Colombia's ambassador from Nicaragua, dispatched a naval task force to San Andrés, and landed an additional 500 Colombian marines and a squadron of Mirage fighters on the island. This was accompanied by a huge propaganda cam-



paign around the theme of defending Colombian "national sovereignty" from Nicaraguan and Cuban threats.

One of the charges being made in Colombia is that Cuba is behind Nicaragua's declaration. This charge serves two purposes. In the first place, the Cubans make a more credible "threat" to Colombia than the Nicaraguans. In addition, by including Cuba, Turbay hopes to turn the masses against two revolutionary "birds" with one stone.

San Andrés is a resort island and duty-free port that is popular with Colombian tourists shopping for bargain-priced imported appliances. Its population is made up of Afro-Caribbeans who speak English, laborers from the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, and Colombian hotel and store owners and soldiers. Most of the island's supplies come from Central America and Cuba.

To bolster its position on San Andrés, the Colombian government "recommended" that every house on the island fly a Colombian flag as a sign of patriotic spirit and warned that anyone not flying the flag would be considered an enemy of the country. This touched off a certain panic among some residents, since there were not enough flags on the island to go around. But into the breach stepped speculators who brought flags in from Colom-

bia, charging exorbitant prices.

The impact of the chauvinistic campaign against Nicaragua and Cuba is illustrated in a comment made by a Colombian soldier on guard duty in San Andrés to a reporter from the Bogotá weekly *Alternativa*. "We have to be ready," the soldier said, "because these Nicaraguans are like Japanese, and the same thing could happen to us as happened to the Americans at Pearl Harbor. Plus the Cubans could be behind all this. We have to be ready."

President Turbay clearly hopes that the patriotic fervor whipped up among business, press, and political circles by "standing up" to the Cubans and Nicaraguans will lessen the attractiveness of those revolutions among the Colombian masses and put the left on the defensive in the March elections.

There is also speculation that the continental shelf around the islands may contain significant oil deposits.

Colombian Trotskyists are fighting Turbay's chauvinist propaganda campaign. A January 16 statement by the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR), which is active in Colombia's Nicaragua solidarity movement, pointed out that the continued "right" of the U.S. government to maintain facilities in the keys is a direct military threat to the Nicaraguan revolution.

The PSR has also denounced "the militarization of the San Andrés archipelago by the Colombian government as an adventurist act against the people of Nicaragua and against Colombians as well." The statement notes that the Colombian people have to pay the high financial costs of the military build-up, while witnessing increasing military control over all aspects of political life.

The PSR added that "the assertion by politicians of the two main bourgeois parties that Cuba has pushed the Sandinistas into making this claim is ridiculous, and the hypocritical statement by President Turbay urging Nicaragua not to become an 'annexationist power' is an absurdity.

"Such statements," the PSR continued, "try to hide from Colombians the fact that the U.S. government is the real annexationist power."

The Trotskyists are calling on Colombian working people to answer the chauvinist campaign against Nicaragua "by stepping up activities in solidarity with the reconstruction of Nicaragua" and by rejecting any "anti-Nicaraguan front 'in defense of national sovereignty.'"

The PSR calls for the dispute with Nicaragua to be settled amicably, "with differences worked out harmoniously while rejecting any imperialist interference." □

Help Build Solidarity Movement

U.S. and Canadian Socialist Candidates Visit Nicaragua

By Fred Murphy

MANAGUA—"In Nicaragua everything is possible," the taxi driver told Matilde Zimmermann when she expressed doubt that she and four other socialist candidates would fit into his compact cab.

Recapping the story later, U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) vice-presidential candidate Zimmermann cited "the tremendous confidence that the Nicaraguan people have in their ability to do what has to be done."

Zimmermann was part of a delegation of U.S. and Canadian socialist candidates who completed a six-day fact-finding tour here on February 13. Aside from Zimmermann, the delegation included seven SWP candidates—three auto workers, two steelworkers, a rail worker, and a pipefitter—and Byron Nelson, a member of the International Woodworkers Union from Vancouver, Canada. Nelson was a candidate for Parliament from the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), Canadian section of the Fourth International.

The tour by the nine socialists is part of

an international campaign in solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution launched last year by the Fourth International and its supporters in Europe, Latin America, and other parts of the world.

The taxi driver's theme "was repeated over and over again by every official that we talked to," Zimmermann continued. "They would say, 'The strength of our revolution—what made it possible to accomplish the insurrection and overthrow the dictatorship—gives us confidence that no matter what happens we will be able to accomplish these tremendous tasks.'"

Literacy Campaign

Nicaragua's campaign to teach nearly 900,000 people—more than 50 percent of the country's adult population—to read and write in 1980 is what has impressed the socialist delegation the most.

"Such a gigantic effort is only possible in a country that has had a revolution," Vice-minister of Education and Literacy Crusade Director Fernando Cardenal told

the delegation on February 11. "It is a task that many more developed countries have never carried out."

Cardenal stressed the literacy campaign's \$20 million cost, which Nicaragua hopes to meet mainly from international contributions. Four million dollars has come in so far from many countries, "but no U.S. institutions have sent funds."

The socialists pledged to help step up solidarity efforts for the literacy drive among workers in the United States and Canada.

"Enthusiasm is enormous everywhere," Cardenal said. "We've even had some problems setting up pilot projects in the neighborhoods because everyone wants to participate!" The literacy campaign officially begins March 24.

Health Care

In a discussion on February 12 with Health Ministry representative Alejandro González Argeñal, the socialists learned just how overwhelming the tasks facing



At Managua airport, from left: SWP members John Powers, Sharon Grant, Victor Nieto, Canadian RWL member Byron Nelson, SWP members Mohammed Oliver, Bill Arth, Matilde Zimmermann, George Johnson, and Lee Artz.

the Nicaraguan people really are.

"Foreign intervention and domination of Nicaragua has not been only military," González began. "It has also meant depriving the people of medical care and knowledge about hygiene and health."

Malnutrition, González said, is perhaps Nicaragua's single biggest health problem. "Only 17 percent of infants are born with a normal size and weight," González continued. "Dietetic diseases are endemic among our children, but they can easily be prevented and cured if the proper aid and nutritional education are provided."

Health care was declared free immediately after the revolutionary government came to power last July, "but there just aren't enough resources to provide for all the health needs of the population."

The Health Ministry is now attempting to bring care to remote peasant communities never before visited by physicians.

"Mobilizations of the mass organizations"—the trade unions, the women's associations, the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS) based in the neighborhoods, the Rural Workers Association (ATC)—"is the way we will improve health care," González said.

The CDSs have already organized vaccinations against polio for 80 percent of children under five.

Pro-Union Measures

One of the highlights of the delegation's visit here was a February 7 meeting with leaders of the Julio Martínez United Workers Union, which encompasses some 600 mechanics, laborers, clerks and sales personnel employed by Julio Martínez S.A., the largest chain of auto and farm equipment dealerships and repair shops in Nicaragua.

Union General Secretary Sergio Herrera explained how the Julio Martínez workers had tried to organize a union under the dictatorship but have only been able to really do so now "because of the trade union freedom that the revolution has guaranteed."

SWP senatorial candidate Bill Arth of

Detroit was especially interested to hear Herrera explain how the Sandinista-led government defends workers' rights. "The government has made it absolutely clear that the bosses must cooperate," Herrera said, adding that new labor laws are being prepared that will guarantee the trade unions access to corporate financial records and direct participation in the administration of both nationalized and private enterprises. (Julio Martínez is still privately owned.)

Herrera noted that Nicaraguan union leaders lack experience and he pointed to their eagerness to learn from American trade unionists.

Arth responded that it seemed to him that "U.S. workers have a lot to learn from you." He and other United Auto Workers (UAW) members on the delegation said they would take back to their union locals their new knowledge of Nicaraguan workers' gains and urge the UAW to step up its solidarity efforts with Nicaragua.

When Matilde Zimmermann asked what U.S. trade unionists could do to help Nicaragua, Herrera responded, "Tell the truth about our struggle to the American workers, to the news media."

Rural Workers

"Government decrees alone do not solve problems," explained peasant leader Pablo Roberto Fley when the socialists visited the regional office of the Rural Workers Association in the northern city of Matagalpa on February 9. "It takes the ATC's organized pressure to enforce the decrees and press forward the class struggle" against the landlords.

"The bosses argue that they can't afford to invest to improve the farm workers' situation," Fley said. "So the workers have to fight for their rights as well as demand more decrees."

Fley also outlined how the ATC is working with the Institute of Agrarian Reform to organize small farmers into cooperatives which make it easier for the farmers to obtain financing, machinery, and agricultural chemicals. Six cooperatives are

already functioning in Matagalpa Province, coordinated by an elected farmers' council.

"This will help to build the confidence of the small farmers—they can see that they have an organization that represents their interests," Fley said.

Defense Committees

Accompanied by a young CDS activist he had met who lived in the United States for several years and spoke fluent English, delegation member Lee Artz of Chicago, a steelworker who is the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate from Illinois, visited Acahualinca, one of Managua's poorest neighborhoods, on February 12.

"The people live in houses they've managed to throw together out of scrap lumber or old oil drums that have been hammered flat," Artz said.

"Most of them don't have jobs, but nonetheless they identify totally with the revolution and right in the midst of all the poverty is a monument the local CDS has erected to honor Acahualinca's martyr, a fighter from the neighborhood who was killed in the war against Somoza."

Artz described how the CDSs are organized: "Each block elects about seven people and each of these takes charge of specific tasks—food supplies, vigilance, sanitation, and so on."

The CDSs play an especially important role in making the most pressing needs of the population known to the government. A decree has just been passed setting strict levels on food prices. "That's because when the CDSs met around the city last week, the main thing everyone wanted to talk about was the rising cost of food," Artz said he learned in Acahualinca.

"Now the CDSs are responsible for making sure neighborhood stores observe the limit and for reporting violators to the police and the Ministry of Domestic Trade."

U.S. Working-Class Struggles

Besides learning about the gains Nicaraguan working people are making through the revolution and the problems the country faces, the socialist delegation was also able to talk to Nicaraguans about the struggles of workers and the oppressed in the United States. "We found that everyone distinguishes very clearly between the U.S. government—which they hate for its longtime support to Somoza—and the American people, whom they admire and look to as allies," said Zimmermann.

An extensive article on the SWP's election campaign was featured on the front page of the Managua daily *La Prensa* on February 11. After describing the many obstacles socialists face in presenting their ideas in the United States, *La Prensa* said that these "have not prevented this group of revolutionists from keeping alive the struggle for socialism. . . . They are proposing concretely that the workers should

have their own party and fight not for posts but for a government truly representative of working-class interests.

"In the current presidential campaign they are calling for a radical change in U.S. foreign policy, demanding in the first place an end to the blockade of Cuba and a just recognition of that country. They call for the extradition of the shah and oppose going to war in Iran or in Afghanistan. They also hold that the U.S. government must aid the government of Nicaragua in everything that the Nicaraguan people need. . . ."

The day the *La Prensa* article appeared, SWP senatorial candidate from New York, Victor Nieto, started a conversation with a ten-year-old boy in a restaurant. "I know you," the young Sandinista said, "you're the revolutionary fighters from the United States."

After completing their tour, all nine socialist candidates began speaking engagements in the United States and Canada to publicize the truth about the Nicaraguan revolution and to help build solidarity with it. Matilde Zimmermann has already addressed audiences in the Canadian cities of Hamilton, Toronto, and Montréal, and Byron Nelson spoke about his experiences in Nicaragua at an RWL campaign rally in Vancouver, Canada, on September 17. □

Fidel Castro's Message to Nicaraguan Government

'Trench of Revolution, Freedom, Anti-Imperialism'

[The following is reprinted from the February 3, 1980, English-language weekly *Granma*.]

* * *

In a letter dated October 24, 1979, published in a press release issued by the Government of National Reconstruction of Nicaragua, Fidel Castro, president of the Council of State and Government of Cuba and chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, expressed his pleasure over the fact that Cuba was the place where Nicaragua joined the Non-Aligned Movement.

The letter reads as follows:

"I have been writing a few lines to each member government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to express my thanks for their participation in the 6th Summit Conference. However, when I got to Nicaragua I realized that this type of letter wouldn't make any sense. How could I possibly thank you, our beloved comrades in struggle? How could I possibly acknowledge you, the guerrillas and revo-

lutionaries who stood at our side throughout the difficult battle to make the Conference a success? No, there's no room for such formalities between us.

"Therefore, if there's any reason for this letter, it is that of expressing my happiness over the fact that Cuba was where Nicaragua became an honored member of our Movement; to tell you how deeply moved I was by Comrade Daniel's magnificent speech, in which he announced that his country, still bleeding from the wounds of war and only 41 days after the victory of the Revolution, was joining the Non-Aligned Movement with strength; and to congratulate you for the invaluable role played by Nicaragua, with its immense moral authority, in the outcome of the Conference.

"I'm sure that coming battles will find us shoulder to shoulder once again in the same trench of revolution, freedom and anti-imperialism.

"A fraternal embrace from
Fidel Castro Ruz"

Dictator Faces Growing Anti-imperialist Sentiment

Pakistan's Zia—A Shaky U.S. Ally

By Ernest Harsch

After Iran and Afghanistan: Pakistan?

That question is now worrying many minds in the White House and Pentagon. The anti-imperialist upsurges in Pakistan's two neighbors have had a stirring influence among oppressed peoples throughout central Asia and the Middle East; they have already produced echoes inside Pakistan.

The American imperialists do not want to lose such a valuable ally as Pakistan's Gen. Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, one of the few staunchly proimperialist rulers still left in the region. Following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan against the U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary forces in that country, Washington has acted quickly to try to bolster the Zia regime.

National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski flew off to Islamabad for a series of high-level talks with the general. President Carter offered Zia \$400 million in military and economic aid as the first step in a broader assistance program and proposed the formation of an international "consortium" to further arm the junta. The

1959 U.S.-Pakistani military agreement, which provides for direct U.S. military intervention to "defend" Pakistan, was reaffirmed.

Despite this renewed imperialist backing, however, Zia remains a very shaky dictator. He presides over a country of nearly 80 million people that has been rocked by wars, coups, national liberation struggles, and mass upsurges ever since its formation in 1947.

Like other capitalist countries in the region, Pakistan is marked by severe social inequalities. The overwhelming majority of the population—the workers and peasants—live in conditions of extreme poverty. Although disease is common, there is only one doctor for every 6,000 persons. The infant mortality rate is 121 out of every 1,000 births. Only 20 percent of the population can read or write. Of all children between the ages of five and fourteen, 34 percent have to work in order to live.

Punjabis, who comprise a little more than half the total population, dominate in

business, the army, and government. Other nationalities, particularly the Baluchis and Pushtuns, are oppressed.

Since its formation more than thirty years ago, the Pakistani state has been heavily dominated by imperialism, particularly American imperialism. More than \$5 billion in U.S. military and economic aid has been poured into the country. During the 1960s hundreds of Americans were stationed there.

The U.S. economic aid did not benefit the population as a whole, but helped to strengthen the Pakistani bourgeoisie—the "twenty-two families" that dominate the capitalist economy and live off the exploitation of the workers and peasants.

The masses of Pakistan did not passively accept such conditions. They fought back.

In 1968-69 mass student demonstrations, urban revolts, and workers' strikes led to the downfall of the Ayub Khan dictatorship.

Two years later, in 1971, the oppressed Bengalis of East Pakistan, responding to a ferocious military crackdown, launched a

struggle for their national independence. They finally won in December of that year, establishing the newly independent state of Bangladesh.

From 1973 to 1977, the Baluchis waged an armed struggle against the central government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Some 70,000 Punjabi troops were moved into Baluchistan, killing thousands of Baluchis and driving thousands of others across the border into Afghanistan, where they received sanctuary.

In 1977 widespread discontent with the Bhutto regime erupted into massive demonstrations, general strikes, and revolts in Lahore, Karachi, and other major cities. To head off an even bigger upheaval, the military deposed Bhutto in July 1977, seized power, and declared martial law. (Bhutto was eventually hanged in April 1979.)

General Zia claimed that he had acted in defense of "democracy," but his real aim was to suppress the mass movement. Strikes were outlawed, demonstrators were arrested and clubbed, and severe press censorship was imposed. Zia's promise to hold elections was repeatedly postponed. Under the guise of instituting "Islamic justice," public floggings were introduced for the slightest infraction of martial law. In January 1978, more than 100 striking textile workers in the Punjabi city of Multan were massacred by the police. Hundreds of unionists have been whipped and arrested.

In October 1979, Zia broadened his repressive campaign even further, outlawing all political parties. Their offices were sealed, their funds frozen, and hundreds of their leaders detained or placed under house arrest.

Zia's brutality notwithstanding, the Pakistani junta has been incapable of stifling all opposition. During 1979 alone, there were numerous student demonstrations; May Day was celebrated in many areas; despite severe restrictions on the right to strike, railway and shipyard workers, nurses, postal employees, printing workers, bank employees, bus drivers, and others walked off their jobs to press for higher pay or to protest layoffs. In October, 10,000 poor peasants rallied in Rahui, in Sind province.

In a dispatch from Pakistan in the February 8, 1980, *Washington Post*, correspondent William Branigan reported that Zia was "generally regarded as the most unpopular leader in the country's 33-year history as an independent nation." No small achievement in a country that has had many unpopular rulers.

Zia's domestic difficulties have been compounded by the impact of events beyond Pakistan's borders.

The revolution that began in Afghanistan in April 1978 elicited widespread support among Pakistanis, particularly in Baluchistan. Influential groups such as the Baluchi Students Organisation came

out strongly in favor of the Afghan revolution. The fact that Baluchis in Afghanistan have been granted language rights and have benefitted from the land reform in that country has not gone unnoticed. Some Baluchi liberation groups have bases in Afghanistan.

Before their public activities were banned in October 1979, many Pakistani political groups and trade unions declared their solidarity with the Afghan revolution and came out against Zia's support for the Afghan counterrevolutionary forces operating out of Pakistan. They included the Pushtun Students Federation, Pakistan National Party, Pakistan People's Party, Mazdoor Kisan Party, Pakistan Paper Mills Labour Union, Charsaddah Sugar Mills Labour Union, Pakistan Socialist Party, and others.

This popular sympathy with the Afghan revolution has been an important factor limiting Zia's ability to openly aid the Afghan rightists.

The upsurge in Iran and the overthrow of the shah have likewise been very popular within Pakistan. *Los Angeles Times* correspondent Tyler Marshall reported from Pakistan on November 26, 1979, that Khomeini "is regarded as a great man here, both for his part in leading the resurgence of Islam, but even more for his strong anti-American stance."

The increasing anti-imperialist feelings of Pakistanis and their solidarity with the Iranian revolution were dramatically expressed on November 21 when tens of thousands of Pakistanis stormed and burned the American embassy in Islamabad. Zia's police and troops hesitated in moving against the demonstrators, for fear of drawing popular wrath against the government itself.

Following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Zia attempted to whip up an anti-Soviet propaganda campaign to justify closer ties with Washington. But he has not been particularly successful, especially in such traditionally rebellious areas as Baluchistan.

Reporters visiting Baluchistan have discovered little notable opposition to the Soviet action. Despite the extremely repressive atmosphere in Pakistan, some Baluchis have even expressed support for it. In his February 8 report in the *Washington Post*, Branigan noted that in Baluchistan there existed a "reservoir of popular sympathy for the Soviet Union." In a dispatch in the February 3 *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Peter Niesewand reported, "The Baluchis are looking cautiously, and sometimes charitably, at events across the border in Afghanistan." The more radicalized sectors of the Baluchi movement realize that a defeat for imperialism and counterrevolution in Afghanistan can only aid their own struggle for national rights.

The rise of popular anti-imperialist sentiment in Pakistan places Zia in a difficult position. He needs greater imperialist backing to help bolster his regime, yet at the same time does not want to be too closely identified with Washington for fear of the domestic political repercussions.

Tariq Ali, a leader of Britain's International Marxist Group, commented in an article in the January 20 *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, "If he [Zia] permits an election he is finished. If he accepts military aid from the US and permits the establishment of American bases he could well provoke a mass movement which would further destabilise the military's tenuous hold over the country." □

Workers Speak Out for Control of Factories

Iran: Anti-imperialist Struggles Continue

By Janice Lynn

During the last two weeks of February, the big business media focused their attention on the diplomatic maneuvers surrounding the U.S. hostages in Iran, statements by the White House and Iranian government officials, and the United Nations commission that is supposed to investigate the crimes of the shah.

But scant attention was paid to the continuing anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggles by the Iranian masses. For example, the following events received little or no coverage in the capitalist media:

- Millions turned out for demonstra-

tions marking the first anniversary of the revolution and vehemently condemned U.S. imperialism.

- Workers have stepped up their demands for increased powers for their *shoras*, the elected factory committees, which in some instances have taken substantial control over production away from the capitalist managers.

- The Kurdish and Azerbaijani oppressed nationalities have demonstrated their support for the revolution and its anti-imperialist thrust.

- Air force cadets have demanded sho-

ras in the armed forces, like those formed by the workers, and have called for a purge of all officers who have association with the U.S. government.

- The students occupying the U.S. embassy, despite President Bani-Sadr's attempt to isolate them and restrict their radio and TV time, have been speaking before workers' shoras and at demonstrations, and continue to disclose documents they have found. They repeatedly defend their position that Washington must return the shah and his wealth to Iran.

In a February 20 message to the students, broadcast over state radio, Ayatollah Khomeini solidarized with this sentiment, saying:

You should ask forcefully from the United States and any other nation which is supporting this criminal, Mohammed Riza Pahlavi, for his extradition and the return of his wealth, and do not stop until you achieve victory.

And, in Ayatollah Khomeini's February 23 statement, his support for the actions of the students was made even clearer:

"... The Moslem and combatant students who occupied the den of espionage have by their revolutionary deed dealt a crushing body blow against the world-devouring United States and have thereby made the nation proud."

Khomeini went on to say that "the issue of the hostages will be up to the representatives of the people ... since it is the Iranian people who should have a voice in the course of political events."

Khomeini was referring to the elections for representatives to the Islamic Consultative Assembly who will be elected March 14 and April 3. The students issued a communique stating, "We will always submit to the will of the brave and militant nation."

On February 11, millions of people throughout Iran celebrated the first anniversary of the Iranian revolution. This date marked the forced resignation of Shahpur Bakhtiar, the last prime minister appointed by the shah. In Tehran alone, 2 million people participated in the parade, organized by the army. A message from Khomeini was read. It said in part, "... Iran must pursue its decisive struggles until it ends its political, military, economic and cultural dependence on America, this ruthless world-devourer."

A special guest at the celebration was Palestinian leader Yassir Arafat. After Arafat spoke, the demonstrators responded with rousing chants of "Revolution until victory!"

Celebrations were also held in cities throughout Kurdistan. A statement was issued by the Kurdish delegation that is currently negotiating with the central government over Kurdish demands for national autonomy. It said:

One year has now passed since the armed insurrection. On this day all the anti-imperialist

forces in Iran overthrew the monarchy. None of the repressive bodies of the regime, like the army, gendarmes, or SAVAK could hold the old regime intact against the massive uprising of the people. They could not save this pillar of imperialism from destruction.

February 18 is a holiday in the province of Azerbaijan. Two years ago, in its capital city of Tabriz, the first demonstrations calling for the ouster of the shah took place. These massive protests marked the opening of the Iranian revolution.*

This year, the Azerbaijani masses marched and rallied in Tabriz to commemorate their role in the revolution; estimates of the size of the outpouring range from 100,000 to 400,000 people. Among the speakers was a representative of the Muslim Students Following the Imam's Line.

In a show of support for the students, a seven-point declaration was voted on by the demonstrators calling for "the continuation of the exposures in order to neutralize the plots of murderous U.S. imperialism."

The Tabriz demonstration was sponsored by the Islamic Republic Party—the party that supports Khomeini. The rally was conducted in Turkish—a significant advance for the Turkish-speaking Azerbaijani people, who have been struggling for their national rights including the right to use their own language. The demonstration was broadcast on television throughout the country. Following this, an interview in Turkish with the families of those martyred in the February 1978 uprising was shown, in recognition of the Azerbaijanis' contribution to the revolution.

The anti-imperialist actions of the students has spurred the further development of shoras in the factories and their control over conditions and production. For example, the Islamic shora of the oil excavation workers has pointed out how the anti-imperialist momentum affected them:

After the occupation of the U.S. spy center and after the isolation of the conciliators [referring to former Prime Minister Bazargan and his colleagues] our struggles made possible the establishment of the National Excavation Company [controlled by the shoras].

The shoras of the oil excavation workers explained that they have taken control of the industry and have been able to get the excavation instruments to work without the help of U.S. technicians. This proves, they say, that they needn't be dependent on the skills of U.S. corporations.

From February 17-19, the Iranian government's Ministry of Labor sponsored a seminar to draft statutes for the shoras. About 1,000 workers participated, according to reports from Iran, representing shoras from throughout the country. The workers were outspoken in expressing the need for the shoras to take on increased powers. Many Iranian workers have begun to see that to truly achieve independence

*See article in July 10, 1978, issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* for further details.

from U.S. imperialism, they must also challenge the factory owners for control over production.

A representative of the shora from the Kurush Company in Hamadan captured the thinking of the workers at the meeting when he said, "Our plan is to have shoras with executive powers—shoras that have complete power in the factory."

A representative from the steelworkers shora in Kerman added, "Shoras must have complete control over the factory so the workers can elect their own managers."

The representative from the shipbuilders' shora in Bushehr, a port in the south, explained how their whole enterprise is now under the control of the shora. As a result, he said, the workers have been able to revive production there.

A representative of the Islamic shora in the city of Yazd said, "The capitalists want to close down the factories. But if the decision-making power is given to the shoras, all the problems will be solved."

"No worker has left the country," said the representative of the workers of Khuzestan province, referring to the problems that resulted when many managers fled after the revolution. "The workers are the ones, who through their shoras, are defending the revolution."

Seeing the gains that the workers have been able to make through their shoras, members of the Iranian air force have also raised demands for shoras in the armed forces.

A five-day sit-in by 2,000 Air Force cadets at Tehran University's mosque demanded the formation of shoras and a thorough purge of the country's armed forces. They denounced senior officers who they accused of harboring pro-American sympathies.

They ended their demonstration February 18 after receiving assurances from Ayatollah Khomeini that their grievances would be investigated.

The next day President Bani-Sadr was named commander-in-chief of the armed forces by Ayatollah Khomeini. In a recorded message broadcast to the armed forces, Bani-Sadr declared, "The army needed to be purged, but any purge must be carried out fairly."

The Air Force cadets, however, vowed to resume their protests if Bani-Sadr did not meet their demands within a week.

These struggles among powerful sectors of the Iranian working class and within the armed forces pose important tests for the new government. The masses are looking for solutions to the economic and social problems of the country and see the shoras as playing an important role in countering the capitalists' sabotage. They have seen the gains that can be won through their independent organization into shoras—which are helping to solve their daily problems and counter imperialist threats. □

Conditions in Thai Refugee Camps Expose U.S. 'Relief' Effort

By Fred Feldman

Starvation, bloody shoot-outs, robbery, and prostitution—that's what Kampuchean refugees find in the camps maintained by reactionary gangs, with the direct support of the Thai government, on both sides of the Thailand-Kampuchea border.

The real situation is quite different from the picture painted by Joan Baez, Leo Cherne, and other organizers of the "March for Survival." Visiting a refugee camp on the Thai side of the border in early February, they presented it as a relatively secure haven in contrast to Kampuchea. They falsely portray the Heng Samrin government as deliberately starving and exterminating the Kampuchean people.

Many thousands of Kampucheans took advantage of the fall of Pol Pot in January to flee the country while tens of thousands of others were forcibly brought to the borders by Pol Pot's troops. Still others fled the fighting and economic disruption that followed.

The refugees, their needs ignored, became pawns in a drive engineered by Washington and Bangkok against the Heng Samrin government.

The Thai military dictatorship and the rightists foster the flow of refugees in hopes of creating a permanent base for rightist operations against Kampuchea.

Food Stations Closed

That is why the Thai army has now ordered relief organizations to shut down border distribution stations that were providing food to residents of western Kampuchea.

These stations, which were not under tight control of the Thai army and the rightists, played a part in ending famine in the war-ravaged western fringe of Kampuchea. The Heng Samrin government encouraged Kampucheans to get food at these stations.

The Thai army's goal in closing the stations is to force thousands of Kampucheans to choose between hunger or moving into refugee camps controlled by the Thai army or rightist outfits.

Recent reports by Richard Nations in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* have begun to lift the curtain a bit on conditions in these camps.

Worst off may be those under the control of Pol Pot's "Khmer Rouge" gang. "The relief agencies," stated Nations in the December 7 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "are increasingly sensitive to allegations of supplying the Khmer Rouge, particularly in the face of the telling contrast

between the desperate conditions of those under Pol Pot control and the healthier conditions among the refugees gathering in the north. A relief official said: "The conclusion is difficult to escape: the Khmer Rouge starve the people and feed the soldiers to fight."

Khmer Serei Camps

But life is hardly easier for those saddled with guardians from the "Khmer Serei" (the general label used for all the other rightist groups that trace their origin to the pre-1975, pro-U.S. dictatorship).

They are led by men like Van Sari, head of Camp 204. He "has been smuggling gems and timber out of Kampuchea since the Khmer Rouge takeover in 1975," writes Nations in a report on these camps in the February 1 *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

"The Khmer Serei factions," Nations says, "are also competing for the control of people and commerce. The more people in a camp, the larger the relief ration the leaders can claim from the Red Cross, and the greater surplus they can resell to villagers coming from inside Kampuchea."

"In an effort to bypass the leadership of the camps, the Red Cross in mid-December opened a direct delivery point at Baan Nong Chan, offering 30 kgs of rice to anyone from the interior. This knocked the bottom out of the rice market in Camp 204, whose soldiers retaliated with a dawn raid on December 30, scattering the Khmer group assisting the Red Cross and Nong Chan."

Bandits Squabble

The fight over dividing the spoils is getting increasingly bloody, with reports "that the self-styled Prince Norodom Soriavong, whose own armed group was operating from a camp near Camp 007, was murdered inside Kampuchea last week after an argument over his attitude to relief supplies."

In the camp at Nong Samet, just inside Kampuchea, major fighting reportedly broke out:

"The armed force in Nong Samet—estimated by the Thais to number 2,000—amounted to an uneasy coalition of, among others, former Khmer Rouge soldiers and ex-Lon Nol officers. Politics in the camp polarised between those following the Thai line on unity against the Vietnamese—including cooperation with the Khmer Rouge 12 kms. north—and those who considered Pol Pot as great a foe as Heng Samrin."

"In December, In Sakhan, leader of Camp 007, led the hardliners in a power

grab, forcing Moul Sary, his former adviser, to flee an assassination attempt and seek the protective custody of the Thais. . . . On January 3 the tension [between ex-Khmer Rouge led by Anduong Suvanakiri and Khmer Serei forces] erupted into battles that lasted for a week after In Sakhan executed 15 of Anduong Suvanakiri's followers."

Nations doesn't mention how many innocent refugees were killed in the cross fire between the two gangs of bandits, but he describes it as a "civil war" in which refugees were forced to flee "to rival camps in Thailand."

Why is it that the "March for Survival" was silent about the real conditions in the refugee camps? Why is Leo Cherne's "International Rescue Committee" so uninterested in rescuing these people from their Khmer Rouge and Khmer Serei captors?

The tipoff is Nations' comment that the clashes in the camps "discredit relief operations and support those international relief officials who favour delivering food to Phnom Penh."

Coming in the wake of the battles at Nong Samet, the Cherne-Baez "March for Survival" tried to cast a smokescreen around the real situation at the Thai border. By pointing accusing fingers at the Phnom Penh government, they obscured the way most "relief" operations at the Thai border are being used to try to continue an imperialist-engineered war against Kampuchea.

Their performance at a refugee camp in Thailand helped to conceal the victimization of the refugees in the camps, as right-wing gangsters and Thai officials line their pockets.

That cover-up is what the "March for Survival" was all about. □

Cairo, Tel Aviv Exchange Embassies

Israeli diplomats formally opened an embassy in Cairo February 18 under the terms of the Camp David accords. An Egyptian embassy is scheduled to open shortly in Tel Aviv.

The exchange of embassies coincides with new repressive moves by Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat, and with the decision of the Israeli regime to expand its colonization of the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River.

According to reports from Cairo, loud wails of mourning from a hostel for women students broke out as the Israeli flag was unfurled for the first time in an Arab capital.

Wu Jingru—Veteran of the Socialist Struggle in China

By F.H. Wang

A veteran Chinese revolutionist passed from the scene with the death in Shanghai, October 15, 1979, of Wu Jingru (Wu Ching-ju). She was 72 years old and the wife and lifelong companion of another veteran of the Trotskyist movement, Zheng Chaolin (Cheng Ch'ao-lin). Death came suddenly as the result of a heart attack.

Together with her husband, Comrade Wu had been released from a labor reform camp last June 5, enjoying barely four months of comparative freedom. Several other Trotskyist prisoners were released at the same time. All had been falsely accused as "counterrevolutionaries." Their release and restoration of their citizenship rights was an oblique acknowledgement of the falsity of the accusation.

Comrade Wu was arrested by the Chinese Stalinist authorities in December 1952, together with her husband and between 200 and 300 other Trotskyists—a general sweep of the revolutionary critics of the Mao regime. After five years in prison and partially crippled by rheumatism and malnutrition, she was released. But her husband, an outstanding Marxist theoretician and revolutionary leader, went on to serve a record total of twenty-seven years, first in a regular prison and in the last few years in a labor reform camp.

At liberty, Comrade Wu found herself isolated in an inhospitable Shanghai. Ties with relatives and friends had been lost or broken. Her former landlady gave her shelter, and comrades in Hong Kong helped out, enabling her to survive a very difficult time.

Even this existence with its meager satisfactions was not to last long. In the mid 1960s, the Mao-inspired "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" engulfed China with its violence and ideological terror. Since Comrade Wu had been in prison as a "counterrevolutionary" and her husband was a leader of a "counterrevolutionary gang," she became a target of repeated "criticism and struggle" actions by the consciously vicious Maoists and the equally violent but deceived "Red Guards."

By that time, Comrade Wu was suffering from partial paralysis and impairment of vision amounting almost to blindness, but the heroes of the "cultural revolution" did not spare her on that account. At intervals they dragged her from her attic room in a dilapidated building and down to the street where they reviled and defamed her and even resorted to physical abuse. Each time, after being subjected to such "criticism," the frail woman had to be carried back to her room by her landlady's son, who had known her since he was a child and knew she was no "counterrevolutionary."

The year 1972, when the Maoist rampage reached its finale, brought a radical change in Comrade Wu's situation. Her husband and some other Trotskyists were moved from the regular prison to a "labor reform camp" in the Pudong district of Shanghai. Comrade Wu was ordered to move there and stay with her husband. There she remained for seven years, until June 5 of last year, when she and her husband (as well as twelve other Trotskyists) were allowed to leave the camp. The couple were allotted a suburban apartment.

The authorities also restored "full citizenship" rights to the ex-prisoners. They could resume contact with surviving relatives and correspond with friends elsewhere. Thus for the first time in 27 years, Comrade Wu Jungru was able to look forward to a more normal life of a human being. It was not to be. She was cheated. Her death is a grievous loss. We, her comrades, derive comfort, however, from contemplating her useful life and her devotion to the cause of socialism.

* * *

Comrade Wu joined the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1927 as the second Chinese revolution was surging to its crest. She was then twenty years old and an active participant in the class struggle of the workers in Wuhan, working closely with Zheng Chaolin, whom she later married. When the revolution went down to defeat, due to the opportunist policies foisted on the CCP by the Stalin-Bukharin leadership of the Communist International, she went to Shanghai to engage in clandestine revolutionary work. The party split in 1930 and Comrade Wu went with the expelled Trotskyists. In 1931 she was arrested for the first time by the Kuomintang police, together with Zheng Chaolin, but was released after a brief jail term. Zheng was given 15 years. After that, as a Trotskyist-communist, Comrade Wu devoted herself entirely to revolutionary educational work, which was her special bent. Her efforts were directed especially toward working women and children of the working class. She labored in this field until her arrest by the secret police of the Peking regime in 1952.

Such a *curriculum vitae* may appear very simple and ordinary, characteristic of countless unsung revolutionary activists. No dramatic exploit attaches to Wu Jingru's name. Nor was she noted for any written contribution. Neither in the CCP nor later in the Trotskyist movement,

Fourth International on Chinese Trotskyists

[The following statement was issued by the World Congress of the Fourth International in November 1979.]

* * *

The World Congress of the Fourth International hails the release of twelve Trotskyists imprisoned for twenty-seven years in the People's Republic of China. It salutes the memory of the revolutionary militant Wu Jingru, who died recently at the age of seventy-two. She was freed on June 5, 1979, together with her husband, Zheng Chaolin, aged seventy-eight. A member of the first generation of Chinese Communists, he was imprisoned for seven years by the Kuomintang regime and rearrested in 1952, despite having dedicated his entire life to the revolution.

The World Congress demands a full clarification of the situation of the

many Trotskyists who were arrested in the early 1950s and who have not been heard from for a long time. Many of them have surely died in prison. The Chinese bureaucracy continues to keep silent about their fate. The full truth about them must be made public!

The World Congress demands the lifting of the slanderous charges of "counterrevolutionary" that were used to justify the arbitrary arrest of the Trotskyists. All restrictions on the activities of those who have just been freed must also be lifted. This twofold battle for the political rehabilitation of revolutionary Marxists and for their right to be active and to defend their political ideas and program is part of the overall fight of the Chinese working masses to regain possession of the real history of the Communist movement and the revolution in China, and to establish genuine socialist democracy.

neither during the period when she worked within the organizations, nor in the years when she worked among the nonparty masses, did she ever acquire or seek any official title or hold any office. She did have leadership qualities, however, and was a good administrator, as shown in her educational labors. Yet she preferred to remain a rank-and-filer. This may be explained by the fact that she was repelled by the careerism evident even among supposed revolutionists, especially when the Wang Ming group dominated the CCP. She and Zheng Chaolin were both completely free of personal ambition and adamantly opposed to bureaucratism and careerism.

Though a very gentle person, Comrade Wu was strong-willed and possessed great fortitude, perseverance, and courage. Having fixed her course and chosen her road, she kept to her way unfalteringly, undaunted by hardships, difficulties and dangers. Ever since I had come to know her in 1931, I never knew her to waver or regret her decision.

In her private and personal concerns and choices, Comrade Wu again showed her fidelity to the course she had chosen. It could be said, in fact, that the two aspects of her life, the political and the personal, were really one—one and indivisible. She was born into a rich family in the southwest province of Yunnan in the year 1907. The family wealth meant that she would always have a place of retreat. When the revolution was defeated in 1927, many disillusioned young men and women who had joined the revolution went home—"returned prodigals"—reintegrating them-



WU JINGRU

selves into their families and compromising their principles. But not Comrade Wu. She continued her revolutionary activities under the dangerous conditions of Kuomintang reaction. Following the 1931 arrests, she remained in Shanghai to provide liaison between the comrades in prison and those on the outside.

In 1952 and after, when the Trotskyists were imprisoned by the Mao regime, Comrade Wu spurned an opportunity to "rehabilitate" herself by divorcing her "counter-revolutionary" husband and coming to terms with her parental family. Instead, she hewed to the revolutionary principles that had become a veritable part of her being. Resisting every temptation, she remained true to herself to the end, an exemplar of the indomitable spirit of the Trotskyist revolutionary vanguard. □

Condemn OST Attack on Panamanian MSR

[The following statement was issued by the Bureau of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

* * *

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International repudiates the antidemocratic methods, foreign to the revolutionary Marxist tradition, used by the leadership of the Socialist Workers Organisation (OST) of Costa Rica on January 7, 1980, in raiding the headquarters and stealing material resources and propaganda from the Revolutionary Socialist Movement (MSR) of Panama. Having the support of a small minority, they claimed to 'expel' all the comrades loyal to the Fourth International who rejected the split by those who proposed affiliation to the Parity Committee formed by the Bolshevik Faction and the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI). [See "The Split by the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency and Bolshevik Faction," December 4, 1979, *IP/I*, page 1275.]

Indeed, this action of the OST, an organization participating in the Parity Committee, is clearly sabotage of the revolutionary activity our MSR comrades have recently been carrying out in relation to the protests of the Panamanian people against Reza Pahlavi, ex-shah of Iran, who has found refuge in that country. Our comrades have been in the vanguard of the massive mobilizations against the ex-shah and the Panamanian government, which had accepted the dictates of U.S. diplomacy. There has been worldwide publicity of the repressive actions taken by the Panamanian National Guard against these demonstrations and particularly the heavy repression that injured our comrade, Miguel Antonio Bernal.

The use of violence by the OST against the MSR opens the way to police provocation, to greater repression by the Panamanian government against the MSR, and to the bourgeoisie taking up a campaign discrediting Trotskyism in order to influence broad sectors of the population. For these reasons, the United Secretariat condemns the OST's criminal actions and calls on its members to step back from using such methods.

At the same time, it sends solidarity greetings to our MSR comrades, sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, and calls on all sections of the International to redouble solidarity campaigns with the Central American revolution, of which the Panamanian revolutionary movement is part.

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Taiwan Regime Plans Trial of Dissidents

Eight opposition politicians were indicted on charges of sedition by the Taiwan government February 20. The defendants are expected to be tried shortly by a military court.

The penalty for sedition under Taiwan's rightist Kuomintang regime is death, but the indictment asks the court to commute sentence since the defendants "have admitted their mistakes and show repentance."

The eight defendants were leaders of an opposition current grouped around the magazine *Formosa*, which began publication in August 1979. *Formosa* advocated freedom of speech and assembly, an end to martial law and the one-party dictatorship of the Kuomintang, a free press, and amnesty for political prisoners.

According to the Hong Kong monthly *October Review*, supporters of *Formosa* set up offices in cities throughout Taiwan and held frequent forums. Circulation of the magazine quickly went from 20,000 to 100,000 issues.

On December 10 a rally in Kaohsiung

was called by *Formosa* supporters to mark World Human Rights Day. Some 10,000 people turned out, and a police provocation turned the rally into a battle between demonstrators and police.

According to the Taiwan regime, the eight defendants "instigated the Kaohsiung incident in an attempt to escalate illegal mass violence to subvert the Government." Hsiao Hsin-chieh, a member of the national legislature, is also accused of trying to establish contact with the Peking regime.

The government-controlled press has kept up a running attack against the "rebels and traitors" associated with *Formosa*, which was banned following the Kaohsiung incident. The case has attracted wide attention among immigrant circles abroad who favor greater democratic rights in Taiwan. The regime announced that an open trial would be held after receiving pleas for leniency from thirty leading Chinese writers and scholars living in the United States. □

South Africa's New Antilabor Laws

[In June 1977, one year after the beginning of the massive student protests, township uprisings, and general strikes of 1976, the South African regime appointed a commission to study why its existing labor legislation had not been effective in controlling Black workers.

[Headed by Nicholas Wiehahn, an adviser to the Department of Labour, the commission's recommendations were published in early 1979. Its major proposals—including the extension of formal trade union recognition to African workers for the first time—were accepted by the government.

[The basic aim of the new policy was to increase restrictions on the Black union movement by bringing it within the framework of the regime's antilabor legislation. This includes severe curtailment of the right to strike, prohibition of any political activities by the unions, and extensive government interference in the day-to-day affairs of the unions.

[The following is an interview with Mary Ntseke, secretary of the Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU) of South Africa. It was obtained by John Hawkins on November 18, 1979, in Washington, D.C., during a visit to the United States by Ntseke.]

* * *

Question. In a report recently issued by the Wiehahn Commission in South Africa a number of proposals are made for changes in the laws governing Black trade unions in that country. What is the Black Allied Workers Union's assessment of the report?

Answer. The Wiehahn report will not change anything. The Wiehahn report was drawn up within the framework of the existing apartheid system. It has been framed by the South African government to throttle Black trade unions in South Africa.

Of course, you have to realize that Black trade unionism in South Africa has come to stay.

So to cover themselves, to seem as if they are doing something for Black trade unions, they decided to have the Wiehahn report, which is not in the interests of the Black workers and Black trade unions in South Africa.

Q. Does the report propose any new restrictions on who can hold union office?

A. The Wiehahn report makes no mention of restrictions on who can be elected to union office.

The main difficulty is the question of

registration.¹ This registration is going to prescribe who is to be at the head of the unions, because the registrar himself is going to decide whether this or that union may register or not.

This in and of itself will place limitations on those who will lead the unions, even though the report does not say anything on who can be elected.

Q. What effect has the report had on efforts to organize Black workers?

A. It varies with the type of coordinating bodies that the particular union is affiliated to.

For instance, ever since we became aware of the report, we have noticed that the [white-led] Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA) is organizing workers in factories where a Black trade union movement has existed. Because TUCSA is organizing workers, the [Black-led] union automatically becomes weak, since the union that is organized by TUCSA receives assistance from management.

Q. Has any Black trade union voiced its intention to register in compliance with the Wiehahn report?

A. The majority of Black trade unions are not prepared to register. At the moment none has registered, except for negotiations that are going on between the registrar and the National Union of Clothing Workers. This was disclosed recently by Lucy Mvubelo, secretary of the National Union of Clothing Workers.

Q. Does the Wiehahn report alter in any way the laws governing strikes by Black workers?

A. That provision will be discussed and decided by the government in February. At the moment the provision is still as it was.

According to the law in order to go out you must make an application with the commissioner for an affidavit and wait for an answer as to whether you have the right to strike.

You can imagine how long it takes. When you feel the need to strike, it is because of an issue that you want to be attended to immediately. But, of course,

1. All unions in South Africa must now register for official recognition by a government-appointed registrar, who will decide which unions meet the exacting criteria for recognition. Threats have been made that those unions that refuse to register or fail to win approval will be forced to shut down.—IP/I

authorization from the government never materializes.

Q. Why was the commission set up when it was?

A. As I said, the Wiehahn report was designed specifically to throttle Black trade unions in South Africa, because the South African government has realized that the Black trade unions have come to stay. So the only solution for them is to get a commission to produce a report that proposes measures to water down the Black trade unions.

During the rebellions of 1976, because our people were not well organized, when there was a call to stay at home it became very difficult because there were no authoritative trade union leaders to tell the people which direction to take.

If there had been such leaders the economy of the country could have been crippled.

Because of the vulnerability of the economy, and because the state of the economy means a lot to the South African government, they decided to establish the Wiehahn Commission.

Q. What has BAWU been doing to organize opposition to the proposals made in the Wiehahn report?

A. BAWU has spoken to a number of unions about refusing to register. And BAWU is supported in this position by many clear-minded leaders in South Africa.

We have let them know that BAWU will not register under any circumstances. BAWU has the interests of the Black man at heart. We are working within the framework of the Black man in South Africa.

Q. What does the government propose to do to enforce registration? What would be the penalty for not registering?

A. According to the Wiehahn report, if a union does not register, it will face the consequences to be decided upon by the registrar. What those consequences will be, we don't know. We'll see when they come.

Consequences or no consequences, the Black Allied Workers Union will not register, but we will go on organizing Black workers.

Q. Lucy Mvubelo, secretary of the National Union of Clothing Workers, is currently touring the United States. You have recently had a chance to talk to her about the message she is presenting. Could you comment on her tour and what she is saying?

A. Mvubelo has been giving the American people the wrong impression of the sentiments of Black workers in South Africa.

On her tour she is claiming to be a leader of the people of South Africa. In reality she

is representing only the National Union of Clothing Workers. She has no mandate whatsoever from the people of South Africa.

She has come here through the South Africa Foundation to speak in favor of U.S. investments. Yet she has never called

there are children the education is there, clothing is there, books and so on are there—and these things must be attended to.

With the little salaries that women get they must pay for all these things since there is no free public education.



Women in a German-owned Pretoria leather factory.

a general membership meeting of her own union to determine how the workers she represents feel about this question.

Q. What is your view on foreign investments in South Africa?

A. These investments do not benefit Black workers. The Black Allied Workers Union has no interest at all in these foreign investments. In fact our general feeling is that investments in South Africa should stop—all foreign investment irrespective of country.

Q. What is the situation of Black women workers in South Africa and what is their role in the unions?

A. Black women are forced to work in order to assist their families because of the high cost of living.

At about 5:00 a.m. or 5:30 a.m. the women must depart for work and leave their children with an auntie [nanny]. At the end of the work day they pick them up. And at the end of each month a good portion of the wage goes to pay the auntie.

Q. In what industries are these workers concentrated?

A. Black women are concentrated in the clothing industry, domestic work, and in clerical work. If a woman has children she has to work in order to assist her family. If

Q. Are Black women as active as men in the unions?

A. Black women voice their demands on the job. It is simply that many of them are not organized. If they are organized they are generally some of the most militant unionists.

For example, I work with many women who are building workers. When they have a complaint they will flock to the union office and sit down and tell you exactly what they want. And you will see to it that you satisfy these workers as best you can.

Women workers are often more determined than men when it comes to trade unionism. When they tell you they want something they really mean it; they want it. Many times when they have a complaint they seek a solution to it harder than men will.

Q. Are women discriminated against as far as wages are concerned?

A. Yes. The wages a man gets are always higher than those of a woman. This is not decreed by law but is simply the custom.

The employer has set it up that men automatically receive higher wages than women.

Q. The big business media here has

made a lot recently of some supposed reforms in the apartheid laws in South Africa, especially in the pass laws. What is the real situation?

A. The pass laws are still there and the arrests for violations of pass laws are still going on as they have been going on for many years. It is just camouflage—these so-called revisions in the pass laws—so that the government can say that the pass laws are being reduced for people in the urban areas.

Every time a policeman meets you and wants to ask you for a reference book, he can ask you. And if you don't have it on you, you go to the nearest police station.

The government is simply on a campaign to convince public opinion that they are making changes—changes that never materialize, changes that don't exist, changes that are not handed over to the people.

Q. What about the proposed parliamentary bodies that would supposedly give some Blacks a political voice?

A. The government speaks in terms of parliamentary bodies for Coloureds and Indians—bodies that would have no real power whatsoever.²

The Coloureds and Indians have let it be known that they do not want those concessions because they exclude Africans. It was a very good move for the Coloureds and Indians to take that stance in solidarity with Africans. □

2. The 750,000 Indians and 2.5 million Coloureds (of mixed descent) are part of the Black population of South Africa, together with the 19 million Africans.—IP/I

Appeal for Amnesty in Indonesia

An appeal for amnesty has been issued on behalf of more than 1,000 political prisoners held since the right-wing coup in Indonesia in 1966. The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, which initiated the appeal, notes that in many cases there have been no trials. Moreover, "trials that have been held have been totally unsatisfactory on any criteria of natural justice and commonly accepted standards. Those prisoners who have been released have not had their full civil rights restored, but on the contrary are required to carry special identity cards and have great difficulty obtaining employment."

The appeal for an amnesty was signed by forty-six members of the British Parliament, as well as by prominent figures from France and Italy.

Grenada: 'Let Those Who Labour Hold the Reins'

By Alain Krivine

[The following article is based on a visit by French Trotskyist leader Alain Krivine to the Caribbean island of Grenada in late December.

[In his introduction, Krivine points to the wave of demonstrations, general strikes, and popular uprisings that are sweeping the entire Caribbean. "But it is in Grenada where the most radical changes have taken place," he says. "On March 13, 1979, the dictator Eric Gairy was overthrown by an insurrection that was led by a Castroist party, the New Jewel Movement. Since this victory, the colonialists as well as the national bourgeoisies are afraid that Grenada will become another Cuba, and that this 'bad example' will spread throughout the Caribbean."

[Krivine also points out that as a direct result of U.S., French, British, and Spanish colonialism, each of the islands in the Caribbean has very little contact with the others. Languages vary from one island to another, so news is not easily exchanged. In addition, he says, "With the changing of planes and the long waits, it takes almost as much time to go from Martinique to Grenada (a distance of only 300 kilometers) as from Paris."

[Krivine concludes that the dramatic rise of struggles in the region paves the way for concretizing the idea of a socialist United States of the Caribbean.

[The article appeared in the February 7-13 issue of the French Trotskyist weekly *Rouge*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

The small Pearl's airport already gives you an idea of what has taken place in Grenada. Posters of the New Jewel Movement cover the walls of the room where a rigorous check of new arrivals is carried out.

The official slogan of the revolution, "Let those who labour hold the reins," forms the border of a poster announcing a Grenadian women's conference.

In civilian dress and in uniform, soldiers of the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA) are present. The olive-green army fatigues they wear today were sent by Pinochet to the dictator [Sir Eric Gairy] several months before his overthrow.

We have to cross the island to reach the capital city of St. George's. For forty kilometers, on both sides of the bumpy road, you see one plantation after another of cocoa, nutmeg, and bananas—the island's three main crops.

Most of the agricultural workers live in

small, wood-frame houses, sometimes without electricity or running water. In several towns, brigades of volunteers have taken on the task of building new houses.

The land is very fertile, but the dictatorship left the population in deep poverty. Three-quarters of the food must be imported, on this island of 100,000 inhabitants.

Forty percent of the people are functionally illiterate and the unemployment rate approaches 50 percent. Today the factories have practically disappeared. In 1969, 2,473 workers were employed in industry. Today, not more than 350 remain.

Now, all political power is in the hands of the New Jewel Movement (NJM). We asked George Louison, minister of national education and social affairs, to tell us more about this situation:

We have never hidden that we are struggling for socialism. This is in our program and we consider our party to be a vanguard socialist party. Because of the anticommunist campaign carried out by the dictatorship against our party, a minority is still opposed to socialism. But the workers have confidence in us. Our relations with the bourgeois parties are nonexistent. In the past when we entered an alliance with them, for instance against fascism, we always preserved our independence as a party.

Formally there still exist two bourgeois formations. One, of the extreme right, completely disintegrated after the revolution. The other, the Grenada National Party, did not take part in the revolution, but after March 13 tried to resurface, attempting to hold public meetings. To this day, these meetings have not been able to take place because the workers have not allowed it and have chased them away.

They are attempting to campaign around the release of political prisoners and the holding of "democratic" elections. But the workers have already voted for us—on March 13.

There are two businessmen in the government, politically men of the left-center, but they are no obstacle to the revolutionary measures. On the other hand, we were forced to close down the offices of the one bourgeois newspaper, *Torchlight*, which spent its time spreading counterrevolutionary slanders and lies.

Today only one newspaper exists, the *Free West Indian*. This weekly defends the government's positions and sells about 6,000 copies. In addition, the NJM puts out a mimeographed news sheet.

A New Army

The new army, such as it is, is composed solely of activists and sympathizers chosen from among volunteers. Faced with the possibility of an invasion by Gairy's mercenaries, the leaders do not hide that they are engaged in a race against time in the army's training, consolidation, and political education.

How many men and women are there in the army? The answer is vague, but it seems likely that it is close to 1,000, making it the strongest army on the English-speaking islands.

Along with the army, there exists in the villages the People's Militia. It is an all-volunteer force that receives weekly training from the soldiers of the PRA, which keeps the arms.

There is a major threat of intervention by mercenaries recruited in the United States by Gairy. In November a counterre-



volutionary plot was discovered. According to the testimony of those arrested and the documents that were found, three American ships were supposed to land an intervention force.

In all their propaganda and speeches, the government leaders ask the population to be vigilant, to patrol the coastline and look out for those who spread false rumors. Such people must be immediately reported to the PRA, the police, the militia, or to telephone number 2265.

A Bourgeoisie That Is Still Powerful

On the economic level, in contrast, the bourgeoisie still maintains a strong position. They control a key industry—tourism, despite the fact that two government-owned hotels were built. They are still powerful in the import-export business. In this area the government has taken some measures to exert a certain control, creating a national office [the National Importing Board].

This body has taken over three decisive imports: rice, sugar, and cement. As a result the price of rice fell by 8 percent and sugar and cement prices fell by about 15 percent. For other imports, the government issues licenses.

In agriculture, the lands of the dictatorship have been nationalized, representing 40 percent of the arable land. Thirty-five percent of the other arable land is farmed by small farmers.

The nationalized sector has been transformed into state-owned farms. The farmers who work this land for a wage can own a small plot of private land.

The pressure of foreign capitalists is also very strong. The government is in the process of paying off the national debt left by Gairy, which amounts to EC\$57 million (one East Caribbean dollar is equivalent to US\$.38).

Within this framework, the government intends to diversify agriculture in order to be able to feed the entire population and the tourists and, in this way, Louison explained, "begin to integrate the tourist industry into the national economy for the benefit of the people of Grenada."

A fishing industry is being developed as well. And it is especially here that aid from the Cuban revolution has been provided.

Cuban Aid

This aid is relatively considerable and is apparent in every sector. Cuba has donated a small fleet of fishing trawlers, one of which serves as a school for one hundred youths. Two thousand people were present at the port of St. George's to welcome the arrival of the trawler.

Twelve Cuban doctors have arrived on the island and have already provided medical care for 7,000 people. Cuba has also financed half the cost of an airport that can accommodate large jets and "thus guarantee the island's independence." Several dozen Cuban workers are already on

site. A vast national fund-raising campaign for the airport is being organized on the island.

In nine months the new government has accomplished some very important measures that can serve as a model for the entire region. Thousands of jobs have been created, roads and houses have been built.

In education, 900 students are taking courses abroad at the University of the West Indies (nearly one student per 1,000 inhabitants). Under the former regime fees were required for all schools. Now, secondary school fees have been cut by a third and the curriculum has changed. A sizable proportion of the country's children [those under five years old] receive a free glass of milk and some receive a hot meal.

However, a number of problems remain to be solved before this island becomes a workers state.

On the economic level, the government must tackle the problem of still very real positions held by the bourgeoisie in agriculture, domestic and international trade, and tourism.

In addition, the NJM still controls the entire political scene. Even though the NJM is encouraging the formation of unions, especially among the agricultural workers, to this day no committees exist allowing all the workers to participate fully in the management of the country.

Certainly, the party and its leadership enjoy an immense popularity in the country, but its relationship with the masses essentially takes place through meetings, the newspapers, radio, and television.

The party and the state are still fused into one, even though the leaders who we met recognize the necessity of separating the two functions. "But we don't have enough cadres," they say, "to truly organize the party."

Today, the revolutionary leadership is very much counting on international solidarity. But it also has many illusions about "the internationalist politics of the Soviet Union."

What is certain is that the counterrevolution will come essentially from the outside. The United States has just created a military task force for the Caribbean. French imperialism is strengthening its military apparatus in the region. The capitalist countries of the Caribbean, with the island of Barbados at the head, are beginning to envisage measures to "avoid the contagion."

In the Antilles, the comrades of the Socialist Revolution Group (GRS) have begun a campaign of solidarity with Grenada. After the victory in Nicaragua, imperialism has been losing ground in the Caribbean. We must be ready to paralyze its counteroffensive. □

Interview With St. Lucia's Deputy Prime Minister

'Cuba Offers Many Examples To Follow'

[The following article is based on an interview with George Odlum, deputy prime minister of St. Lucia and a leader of the left wing of the St. Lucia Labour Party. The interview was conducted at the end of December by Alain Krivine, a leader of the

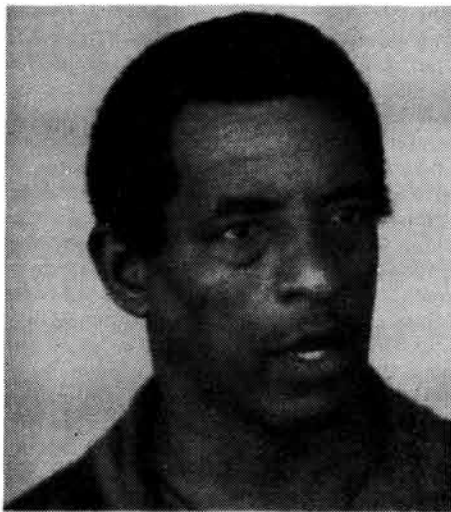
Revolutionary Communist League (LCR—French section of the Fourth International), and Gilbert Pago, a leader of the Socialist Revolution Group (GRS—Antilles section of the Fourth International). It has been translated from the February 7-13 issue of the French LCR weekly *Rouge* by *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*.]

* * *

St. Lucia is a small island with a population of 120,000, of which 30 percent are unemployed. It was granted independence in February 1979, during the wave of "decolonization" carried out by British imperialism in the region. Everything was planned for a peaceful transition to power by Prime Minister John Compton, who had headed the government since 1964, when the island was still a British "associated state."

Compton's conservative United Workers Party (UWP) controlled a large majority of the House of Assembly. But on July 2, 1979, the opposition St. Lucia Labour Party captured twelve of the seventeen seats in the Assembly, against only five for the UWP.

This victory was above all a victory for



GEORGE ODLUM

the left wing of the Labour Party, which won seven of the twelve Labour seats. This left wing is headed by George Odum, a veteran trade unionist who led big struggles by the banana workers and who is the most popular person on the island. He is a socialist and does not hide his pro-Cuban sentiments.

At present deputy prime minister, he has just launched a struggle—based on the unions and the large majority of working people—to remove the present prime minister, Allan Louisy, leader of the right wing of the St. Lucia Labour Party. Responding to his call, 20,000 people assembled in the capital city of Castries in a solidarity meeting for the revolution in Grenada. A test of strength between the two factions of the Labour Party appears imminent.

Odum did not soft-pedal anything during the interview he gave us. He stressed that it was only as the result of a "compromise" that Allan Louisy became prime minister, because "the majority of sym-

patizers and those elected are from the party's progressive wing."

"We proposed that Louisy be prime minister for six months and that after that, I replace him," Odum explained.

But very quickly, the differences deepened, particularly on the question of purging the police and the administration, which the left wing of the Labour Party wanted to do.

"I became absolutely convinced," Odum said, "that although we occupy the government offices, we really don't hold political power."

He is convinced that the prime minister and his followers are "obstructing" the left wing's "progressive and socialist initiatives." He stated, "We will hold mass meetings throughout the country. We will mobilize the people to chase him out. This situation can't go on any longer."

The fact is that the party's right wing constitutes an obstacle on all central questions. Its propaganda against Odum and his colleagues is for the most part based on denouncing them as pro-Cuban—a reflec-

tion of the ruling class's fear that a process identical to that in Grenada will take place in St. Lucia.

For Odum, there is no compromising on these questions. "Cuba offers us an experience and many examples to follow and we are going to be firm on that, very firm."

Among the measures being studied by the left wing of the St. Lucia Labour Party is land reform, for which a commission has been established. "There are big landlords here who must be dispossessed," Odum explains. "They will react against this, of course, and we will have to confront them."

To prepare themselves to respond to any possible imperialist intervention, the question of arming the masses has been posed concretely.

"On the question of a militia, the prime minister is fundamentally opposed," Odum says. "One of the basic reasons why we must force him out is so that we can build a militia. All across the country we have groups, especially the youth, who agree with this idea." □

Position of Grenada's New Jewel Movement

Afghanistan: The Right to Seek Assistance

[The following is reprinted from the January 19, 1980, issue of *The New Jewel*, weekly organ of the New Jewel Movement, which led the March 1979 revolution against Prime Minister Eric Gairy.]

* * *

This week the United Nations voted in support of the United States' resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Grenada disagreed with that resolution; we voted against it.

We believe that every country must have the right to seek military assistance if it faces a threat of invasion, especially when that invasion is intended to overthrow a popular Government or turn back a people's revolution. In the case of Afghanistan, rebels who had gone to Pakistan for aid were armed and trained by the Pakistani military dictatorship with arms supplied by the United States and China. They had then been smuggled back to Afghanistan with the purpose of overthrowing the Government and putting in its place a right-wing backward and anti-progressive Government. It was at this dangerous point that the new Afghan Government called for military assistance from the Soviet Union.

It is important that Grenadians know that the people of Afghanistan made a popular revolution in April 1978. The revolutionary Government has brought many

benefits to the poor people of Afghanistan, a large but backward and feudal country where rich estate-owners (landlords) were oppressing poor peasants mercilessly in conditions near to slavery. The debts of the peasants to the landlords were cancelled; trade unions were made legal and workers rights guaranteed; measures to improve the status of women were undertaken; and foreign domination of the country by Imperialist countries was opposed.

Because of this stand, the big Imperialist countries and the few "big people" affected by the measures have been trying ever since the Revolution to overthrow it. Under this pressure, quarrels began in the Afghan Government as to how to treat the rebels. The original Taraki Government was overthrown by Amin and the rebels treated harshly. This created more unrest and confusion, encouraging more people to rebel. Meanwhile the rebels were being armed and trained in Pakistan. At the point where a large-scale invasion by the Imperialist and landlord controlled rebels was about to occur, the Deputy Prime Minister of the original revolutionary Government overthrew Amin. In order to defend the country against the invasion of rebels, which was already beginning, the new Prime Minister Babrak Karmal called on the Soviet Union for military assistance.

It is interesting to note that a journalist from the *Los Angeles Times*, a very reputa-

ble American newspaper, who visited Afghanistan during the past two weeks, has written that the Afghanistan Army and people have welcomed the Soviet troops, that the Soviet troops have not "taken over" the country, that Afghan troops are fighting the rebels themselves and the Soviet troops are only "standing by" to assist if necessary and to help in maintaining security.

We must remember that Article 51 of the United Nations Charter guarantees this very right for countries to call on each other for assistance in case of threat. If Grenada was threatened with an invasion we would want to have the right to call on any country of our choice to assist us.

We find it a hypocrisy that some of the same countries who supported St. Vincent's right to call in Barbadian troops for assistance over the Union Island incident (even though no invasion was planned) would now deny Afghanistan that same right. Indeed, many countries who have condemned the Soviet Union for giving military assistance when asked for, have nothing to say about the White South African troops being used right now by the British Government in Rhodesia to shoot our black brothers in their own country.

No matter which big country objects we must never bow to threats, harassment or intimidation. We must take a position of principle and support what we know is right. That way we will always be able to hold our heads high. □

Case History of National Chauvinism, Bureaucratic Methods

By Libby Schaefer

[Libby Schaefer joined the Spartacist League (SL) in the summer of 1968. She is a former national secretary of the Spartacist Youth League (SYL) and managing editor of its newspaper, *Young Spartacus*. As youth representative, she was a full member of the Spartacist League Central Committee. After leaving the SYL, she was elected an alternate member of the Central Committee. She later functioned in various capacities for the international Spartacist tendency (iSt), including organizer of the Spartacist Nucleus of Israel, editor of *Spartacist Canada*, and member of the Trotskyist League of Canada Political Bureau. After severe organizational measures were taken against her following a series of fights on political and organizational questions, she resigned from the Spartacist tendency in the summer of 1976. She has recently become a member of the Fourth International.]

[Last week, Part I dealt with the international Spartacist tendency's incorrect position on the national question in Quebec, Ireland, South Africa, Israel, and Iran.]

Part II—Decline of the Spartacists

In the last several years, the U.S. SL's "international Spartacist tendency" has lost one after the other of its small adhering groups internationally. Its only section of some size (300 or less), the U.S. SL, has at best stagnated, and the SL's youth group has shrunk considerably, according to the May 1979 *Young Spartacus*.

In the period 1973-75, the iSt had three "sections"—the American, German and Australian, and "sympathizing sections" in Israel, Italy, Austria, Canada, and France. Since 1975, the groups in Israel, Italy, and Austria have ceased to exist. (The memberships of these three groups in 1975 were four, four, and approximately eight, respectively.) The principal leader of the German section (a group of around fifteen at the time) resigned in late 1976. Reports from former European Spartacists, who have resigned in the past one to two years, indicate that all the members (about twelve to fifteen) of the iSt's much-touted-at-the-time Chilean-section-in-exile (residing in Europe) have left the iSt. Not long ago, the leading figure of the original nucleus of the Canadian section, Murray Smith, resigned from the Canadian group. No growth appears to have occurred in Australia, France, or Canada (whose approximate memberships in 1975 numbered twenty, seven, and twenty).

The only gain registered by the iSt since 1975 was the recruitment in 1977 of about

twenty members of Alan Thornett's Workers Socialist League, itself a split from Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party. These twenty formed the Spartacist League of Britain, adding themselves as one more small sectarian group to the thirty-five-odd small sectarian groups in Britain that claim to be Trotskyist.

The U.S. Spartacist League itself has stagnated in membership size and retreated organizationally, returning to a fortnightly press from a weekly, liquidating several of its local branches, continuing to abstain from mass struggles, and characterizing this period of intense working-class struggles as "a quiescent period in the class struggle" (*Workers Vanguard*, May 19, 1978)—an analysis they used to explain their retreat in press frequency. A year later, the newspaper of the SL's shrinking youth group repeated this assessment, characterizing the period as one of "relative class quiescence" (*Young Spartacus*, May 1979).

Silent Splits and Purges

In 1968 the SL had a faction fight over the question of industrial implantation. A group of comrades characterized SL work as "petty bourgeois" and urged adopting an orientation centering on factory leafletting. The majority of these comrades quit and the remainder were expelled.

Since 1968 the SL has had no faction fights or tendency struggles. At the same time, there have been numerous resignations over political or organizational differences of a few comrades at a time, including, to date, at least six members of the SL Central Committee (of which two were Political Bureau members, one was the editor of *Workers Vanguard*, and one the editor of *Spartacist*).

There have also been a considerable number of resignations of Central Committee members in iSt sections outside the U.S., namely, Germany, Canada, and the former Italian, Israeli and Chilean-exile sections. All of the national chairpersons of these sections resigned, with the exception of Canada where such a figure did not exist. (The principal founding member in Canada, however, did resign.) Several months ago, a purge was carried out against youth members, including several members of the youth leadership, who were suspected of having differences over Iran. Most recently, I spoke with Bill Logan, the former national chairman of the Spartacist League of Australia-New Zealand (SLANZ), who told me he had been expelled from the iSt late this past summer.

These resignations and purges have been accompanied by internal documents or oral reports that attempt to personally smear the members who left and to gut the political content of their differences. With the youth purge, the Spartacists graduated into carrying such personal slander in their public press. The grouping was dubbed the "cloned youth" (without explanation) and accused in the pages of *Young Spartacus* (May 1979) of everything from "lacking a sense of humor" to being "domestic drudges" (referring to two female members) to "abuse and sexual manipulation of a number of women comrades." The article admitted to using industrial implantation as a disciplinary measure—demanding that those with the dissenting opinions get factory jobs or leave the organization.

The case of Bill Logan has particular significance for the Spartacist group. Logan was a member of the Spartacists' international central leadership for ten years. For eight of these, he was national chairman of the Spartacist League of Australia-New Zealand. He was the only long-time leader of a Spartacist section who was not an American transfer but a native of the area. The SLANZ was recognized by the U.S. SL leadership as being the only section in the iSt besides the American to have a viable leadership with some home-grown authority.

About two years ago, Logan was transferred to Britain to be national chairman of the British section. (This is how the Spartacists generally install international leaderships. Sent to replace Logan as Australian national chairman, for example, was Chris Knox, an American Political Bureau member.) In Britain, perhaps too geographically close for comfort, Logan ran afoul of some of Robertson's policies and plans for Britain and Europe. He was recalled to the U.S. for "retraining." He apparently did not recycle according to hopes, and was expelled for "moral turpitude" this past summer. The accusations were cooked up from three-year-old complaints of a few Australian Spartacists. Logan's companion, Adaire Logan—who had also been a member of the SLANZ Political Bureau and played a prominent role in the Spartacists internationally—was dropped from membership without explanation at the time of Bill Logan's expulsion.

A particularly graphic example of the Spartacist school of substituting slander for politics occurred in the formative period of the Trotskyist League of Canada. For reasons known only to themselves, the

Canadian comrades subjected to this process did not resign but swallowed it all.

A dispute occurred over the location of the founding Canadian conference. A group of Canadian members, led by Tom Riley (currently the editor of *Spartacist Canada*) naturally felt the conference should be held in Canada. The Spartacists thought it should be held in the U.S., at the same time and place as the American conference. In the ensuing dispute, the U.S. leadership characterized the Canadians as culpable of nothing less than "Canadian nationalism" and "anti-internationalist parochialism."

The U.S. SL was able to dissuade the Canadians from their "nationalist" position. Having done so, however, they proceeded to mop up with a campaign of severe personal slander. After the Canadians had all agreed with the U.S. position, Reuben Samuels, James Robertson's "deputy national chairman," wrote a summary of what had happened in Canada. In an internal bulletin available to the entire membership, Samuels referred to three of the Canadian members as the "VD clique," alleging that their desire to treat through their own doctors an illness they had had, as opposed to the way Daniel, the American organizer-in-Canada, thought it should be treated, was an example of "Abernesque proto-cliquism."

Samuels' comments in the bulletin characterized one member as "dense and dumb," another as "super-disoriented," and a third as having "in her smiley smirkey style slurped her 'appreciation' for" another member's remarks. These slanders went on for pages (and months).

My own treatment was similar to the above accounts. In my last two years in the SL, the differences I had over several political and organizational questions with the central U.S. SL leadership were increasingly accompanied by campaigns of organizational abuse and slander. The two most serious incidents occurred shortly before I resigned.

The first involved another member, who had shared my position on certain questions. This person was in a delicate legal situation. Coming from a country outside North America, he did not yet have permanent residency in Canada and had been denied a visa to enter the U.S. He had applied for Canadian residency but, because he had a long history as a leftist in his country of origin, it was the opinion of the central Spartacist leadership that he would not be granted residency and an attempt to deport him would be made. It had been the position of the leadership since his arrival in Canada some months previously that, if a deportation attempt were made, the organization would defend him—as it is the elementary duty of any socialist organization to defend its members from attacks by the bourgeois state.

During discussions I had with the

Canadian leadership, around the time of the disputes mentioned, I was told the leadership had decided *not* to do a defense if this member were threatened with deportation, but to let him be deported. The Canadian leadership said they were acting under Robertson's instructions. The reason stated for the policy change was that this member and I were doing more harm than good to the Canadian organization.

It was suggested I call Robertson if I was unhappy with the discussion. I did. I had spoken about two sentences when Robertson began screaming that he was "fed up" with me. "If you don't stop making trouble, I'm going to get rid of you—and the other one too!" he shouted. Then he hung up.

The problems concerning residency and visas of this former Spartacist member have continued over the years, underlining the seriousness of the Spartacists' actions in this case.

The other incident involved Samuels, the deputy national chairman, who interrogated me and the other member, as to whether or not we were cops. On a trip to Canada, Samuels arranged a meeting with me. He raised the question of residency and the member's failure to get a visa to the U.S. Then he said, "We were thinking that you and he were planning to turn state's evidence" (in order for him to get Canadian residency or go to the U.S.).

As "proof," Samuels presented such items as my knowledge of the legal problems involved, complaints I and the other member voiced about the organization, and the difficulty of the latter's situation. I told Samuels that such an idea was crazy, that there was not a shred of evidence, let alone proof, that furthermore I had a long history as a member of the organization, and I only wondered what accusations would be next.

It should be the ABC of a Leninist organization that such accusations are never made without unmistakable proof. Samuels repeated this interrogation about turning state's evidence in a private meeting with the other member. We did not hear about this matter again. The accusation was left hanging. Samuels did not retreat nor say what the organization planned to do about it.

Not surprisingly, after both of us resigned, we received a letter from the Spartacists with a laundry list of accusations—most of which we had never heard before. The list was designed to intimidate us from raising our heads again politically—by threats to scandal-monger and smear our reputations as socialist militants, and to raise issues that could again jeopardize the still precarious geographical status of one of us. This technique of intimidation was the same as that used in other resignations of leading members, and in the recent purges of the youth leaders and Bill Logan.

I have often wondered what happened to

the many comrades who left the SL and disappeared from the political scene. The SL, like Healy's International Committee, has often been an activist's last political stop before leaving politics altogether.

Some SLers have found their way out of the Spartacist dead end. In the past year, a number of former European and American Spartacists—who have left the iSt in the past one to three years—have been in touch with me and other members of the Fourth International to discuss political perspectives, and some have joined sections or sympathizing organizations.

Because its political line is so sectarian and so far from the real requirements of the class struggle, the SL can only be held together by organizational pressure, abuse, and slander against those who dissent from the leadership.

Revolutionists who operate in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky expect differences of opinion to arise within the revolutionary movement. They realize that when such differences do arise in the course of the class struggle, a full political discussion is not an obstacle to arriving at a correct line and carrying it out in a centralist, disciplined manner. On the contrary, such discussion is essential to revolutionary centralism. Organizational solutions to political questions have long been the practice of those with a weak political line who substitute bureaucratic practices for the genuine political authority gained by demonstrating the correctness of their views in practice.

The SL's "international Spartacist tendency" is a mirror image of the U.S. SL. The "sections" of the iSt are run just like local branches of the U.S. SL—by order from New York, and through leaderships installed from New York. Rather than understand that each national group must decide its own tactics and day-to-day work, as it strives to seize power from its own bourgeoisie, the iSt leadership wants tight, close control. Small wonder that the leading figures of virtually all of the Spartacists' small international groups have left the Spartacists and that four sections have disappeared altogether. □

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Statement of the Fourth International

United Secretariat Declaration on Afghanistan

[The following resolution was adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International by a majority vote at its January 26-29 meeting. Following the resolution are two resolutions supported by minorities at that meeting.]

* * *

1. When the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) seized power on April 27, 1978, Afghanistan was one of the most underdeveloped countries in the world. Its society was largely rural. Out of a population of around 15 million, only 15 percent were urbanized. Outside of Kabul, which has 700,000 inhabitants, there were only two cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Some 14 percent of the population was still nomadic.

Afghan society was still burdened by precapitalist socioeconomic structures. Their survival and the weight they retain was directly linked to Afghanistan's isolation and the lack of actual colonization of the country.

Nevertheless, the development of trade and the gradual absorption over recent decades of the Afghan economy into the world capitalist market spurred a process of transforming semifeudal property into semicapitalist property. This led to a growth of social inequality in the countryside and hastened the migration of poor peasants toward the towns. Some became absorbed into the emerging working class (about 150,000 workers are employed in manufacturing and construction). But most swelled the semiproletarian layers that proliferated in the urban areas. Tens of thousands of workers emigrated to Iran, Pakistan, or the Persian Gulf states.

In addition to the commercial bourgeoisie and the traditional petty bourgeoisie, a layer of civil servants, army officers, technicians, engineers, doctors, and teachers emerged in the cities, especially Kabul. They ran up against both a lack of professional opportunities and the social, economic, and political stagnation resulting from the monopolization of power by the big landlords and the monarchical clan.

In the countryside, the big landlords held almost absolute power. The wealthiest landlords took over the functions of heads of communities. They maintained control over the peasant masses through sharecropping, tenant farming, and indebtedness, and they bought off government functionaries. The concentration of ownership over irrigated land was very high. The landlords rented out land, leased water rights, and provided seed and rudi-

mentary farming equipment; in return, they demanded up to two-thirds of the annual harvest. A capitalist sector linked to export agriculture had developed in the previous period.

A large part of subsistence agricultural production (wheat) was on unirrigated land (*lami*). But a substantial percentage of the rural population did not have any land. Even those poor peasants who possessed a few acres of unirrigated land had to borrow to obtain seed and farming implements. In return the peasants had to turn over as much as half their harvest to the rich landowner. Peasants also had to take out loans or mortgage their meager farms to meet other expenses, such as the "bride price," which was more than what a peasant could accumulate through a low-level of subsistence agriculture.

Lami cultivation, moreover, was totally dependent on rainfall. The severely exploited small peasants were thus also vulnerable to famines. Famine provided the big landlords with an additional opportunity to speculate on grain reserves and to acquire new lands, as happened in 1972.

The relations between the Sunni clergy, the big landlords, and the rural community leaders were close. The 250,000 mullahs were paid by the government—that is, by its local representatives tied to the rich peasants—and also received donations from the peasants. Many of them had significant wealth.

In a country isolated from the rest of the world, where the means of communication was sporadic, where the peasants' dependence on their "lords" was very strong, and where rural society was the only point of reference for an immense part of the population, Islam permeated social and cultural life. The mullahs drew considerable authority and prestige from it.

Superimposed over these social structures was an inherited network of tribalism. Tribal organization as such still survived among the nomads and the mountain tribes along the Afghan-Pakistani border. Thus the relations between landlords and tribal and clan chiefs were intertwined.

In addition, ethnic particularism was still alive and molded Afghan society. The Pushtuns represented the largest ethnic group, about 45 percent of the entire population. Pushtuns had acquired the richest lands and established control over the bazaars. A real "Pushtun power" existed.

The main minorities, whose degree of oppression varied, were the Tajiks, Hazaras (of the Shi'ite branch of Islam), the

Turkomans, and the Uzbeks.

The maintenance of tribal divisions helped solidify the local power of the notables. Together with ethnic divisions, the tribal divisions presented an obstacle to the political centralization of the country and could become channels for movements virulently opposed to the "government in Kabul," as all of Afghan history has shown.

In such a society, the agrarian question gives a primary role in the democratic revolution to the peasantry. This is the case even though it is necessary for the proletariat to politically gather the peasant masses around it in order for these democratic tasks to be carried through to the end and to ensure that the democratic revolution grows over into a socialist revolution, that is, the development of the permanent revolution.

2. In July 1973, in order to preserve the power of the royal clan, Mohammad Daud transformed the tottering monarchy of Zahir Shah into a republic.

During the late 1960s, student demonstrations erupted. The king closed the university. The working class launched its first, though very limited, wave of struggles (1968). Following two years of drought, famine provoked uprisings in the countryside. The army brutally suppressed the peasants. Within its own ranks, opposition to the regime developed among "nationalist" military officers, often trained in Soviet academies. Daud found the support he needed to organize the July 17, 1973 coup from among these officers and sectors of the intelligentsia, as well as the bourgeoisie of Kabul. A faction of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which was founded in 1965, initially collaborated with the new regime: the Parcham (Flag) faction led by Babrak Karmal.

Daud's modernization program—agrarian reform, measures against administrative corruption, development of education, restoration of democratic rights—was not put into practice. The notables refused to give up even a small part of their privileges, in a country where 90 percent of the population was illiterate, where only one out of every eight school children was female, where there were only 350 schools for girls, against 2500 for boys, where few schools existed outside the towns, where infant mortality was one of the highest in the world.

Daud thus lost the support of those layers who had hoped to improve their position through the application of a pro-

gram of bourgeois reforms. In addition, Daud faced opposition from a sector of the mullahs, who feared that any growth of centralized institutions would reduce their own powers.

Beginning in 1975, Daud imposed a virtual dictatorship. At the same time, his regime moved closer to Iran. In April 1975, Daud signed an agreement with the shah of Iran, who had offered him \$2 billion to build a railway line between Herat and the Iranian seaport Bandar Abbas, thus aiming to reduce Afghanistan's dependence on trade with the Soviet Union. SAVAK offered its help in repressing opponents of the Daud regime. A rapprochement was reached with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, and even Pakistan. A compromise was worked out with Pakistan regarding Pushtunistan. The regime made plans to train officers in Egypt and Pakistan. In 1977 Daud reached an accord with Iran over division of the waters of the Helmand River, a proposal that had previously brought Zahir Shah stiff opposition from a significant sector of the "nationalist" officers. Daud had planned to visit the United States in September 1978.

American imperialism and its allies in the region were thus seeking to increase their influence in a country, which, since World War II, had been considered by the Soviet bureaucracy as being in a position similar to that of Finland.

Nevertheless, the Daud regime still maintained close relations with the Soviet Union. A twelve-year cooperation treaty was signed in April 1977. The Soviet Union granted a ten-year moratorium on Afghanistan's debt of \$100 million and promised between \$500 million and \$600 million in aid. At the same time it undertook to buy almost all of Afghanistan's production of natural gas. It still continued to train a large percentage of army officers.

Repression against PDPA members and the "nationalist" officers accelerated as the regime's crisis deepened. On April 17, 1978, Mir Akbar Khyber, an intellectual who was a trade-union leader and PDPA member, was assassinated. Two days later, during his funeral, a demonstration of 15,000 persons marched on the American embassy. In reaction to the mobilizations, the regime ordered the arrest of the PDPA leadership.

To protect itself from new blows, the PDPA leadership, in close collaboration with officers who were PDPA members and "nationalist" military officers, organized a coup against the decrepit regime. The "ten-hour revolution" came on April 27, 1978. But Daud's overthrow was more of a coup led by a sector of the officer corps tied to the PDPA than a revolution.

The Soviet bureaucracy certainly did not plan this abrupt change. But the April 27 coup did put an end to the proimperialist course initiated by Daud and guaranteed the Kremlin very close relations with Af-

ghanistan, as reflected in the December 1978 accord (compared to that of April 1977).

3. The mass movement was evident during the days preceding the coup, but the workers and peasants had not been mobilized or organized with the perspective of struggling to overthrow the regime of the royal Mosahaban clan. That was as much a reflection of the nature of the PDPA's social base as of its political orientation.

Since 1965, and particularly since the early 1970s, the PDPA grew primarily in the urban areas, that is, in Kabul. It had an influence among students, the new "middle classes," teachers (especially from the primary schools), and the 8,000 Pushtun army officers. Its base in the urban working class was still relatively limited. It was very weak among the peasant masses.

Since its formation, the PDPA had developed a political orientation that focused on creating a "national democratic government" and a united front of the peasants, workers, progressive intellectuals, national capitalists, and small property owners in the towns and countryside. It thus favored a "democratic and national revolution," as a stage toward socialism.

The 1967 split between the Parcham faction and the Khalq (Masses) faction led by Noor Mohammad Taraki and Hafizullah Amin resulted from political differences over the character of the front the party wanted to establish and the place that the workers should occupy within it. These differences were reflected in Parcham's participation in the Daud regime and the Khalq's refusal to do so. But in addition to this there were ethnic and personal factors that greatly heightened the factional struggles. Reunited in 1977, the PDPA had a membership of only several thousand.

4. The first decree of the new regime of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan established a thirty-five-member Revolutionary Council with full governmental powers. The second decree installed a twenty-one-member cabinet of ministers composed largely of PDPA leaders, with appropriate military representation. Those of Pushtun origin occupied a majority of posts.

During its first months, the Revolutionary Council decreed a series of reforms, in addition to replacing the traditional flag with the red flag.

In mid-July 1978, Decree No. 6 aimed to abolish usury and to partially wipe out mortgage debts and the "serfdom" that flowed from them. Landless peasants were freed of all their debts. Small landowners could recover land they had lost in lieu of debt payment and had to repay only a certain percentage of loans taken out after 1974. In October, Decree No. 7 aimed to give equal rights to women (nondiscrimination in education, abolition of forced

marriage, drastic reduction in the "bride price" and dowries).

On November 28, Decree No. 8 on agrarian reform was promulgated. It placed a ceiling on landownership for each family—much lower for irrigated land (6 hectares) than for unirrigated land. It struck a major blow against the big landlords. Land above the limit was to be distributed to tenant farmers, landless peasants, and seminomads.

This land redistribution affected several hundred thousand families (about 500,000 families did not own any land). Renting out or selling distributed land was forbidden (in 1976, under Daud, the rich landowners profited from a limited reform by buying up land and adding to their estates). This reform was carried out as a distribution of land, but the decree also encouraged the formation of cooperatives.

The industrial and mining sectors—which through majority ownership had already been controlled by the state under the previous regime—was brought under an economic development plan. Foreign trade was placed under state control.

A literacy campaign was planned for the spring of 1979. Officials of the new regime projected educating 2.5 million children and 5.5 million adults over a period of five years, which would have helped considerably in undermining the authority of the mullahs. Limited reforms were introduced in favor of ethnic and cultural minorities. The Revolutionary Council aimed to limit the secular functions carried out by the mullahs.

Trade unions were established. By 1979 they included 100,000 workers and 60,000 service employees. But these union members did not have the right to strike, under the pretext that the "political revolution is over" and that since "the workers control the basic means of production, it is not necessary for them to strike." The union movement was thus more the result of organization "from above" than of a real rise in the mass movement.

Under the backward conditions prevailing in Afghanistan, such reforms—aside from their intrinsic limits—could only be implemented and consolidated through the mobilization and organization of the masses.

The leadership in Afghanistan did not favor the initiation and organization of mass mobilizations, nor did it place a priority on the creation of peasant organizations, which alone would be capable of advancing the agrarian reform and breaking the centuries-old social relationships in the countryside. Such major tasks could not be achieved through government decrees.

The leaders of the PDPA feared that once the traditional social relations were destroyed, the process could escape their control. Their strategy of a "democratic and national revolution" and their political orientation emanating from the school

of Stalinism dictated that they follow a policy of reforms introduced under the control of the state apparatus and the army and backed up by repression.

In order to counteract the inertia of the social structures and to reduce the dominance of the notables, it is absolutely necessary to give priority to organizing the peasant masses in order to enable them to participate directly in the land reform and

The lack of a sufficiently strong and organized working class—with a tradition of struggle and the ability to attract to its side the peasant masses—did not facilitate the development of a dynamic of permanent revolution. This fact could only further highlight the negative effects of the PDPA's policies.

Finally, several months after it came to power, the PDPA leadership was rocked by

tion. By March 1979 he held several important posts.

These conflicts climaxed with the overthrow of Taraki in September 1979 and his replacement by Amin, who took over the presidency of the Revolutionary Council, the main governmental positions, and the office of secretary general of the PDPA. This change went against the Kremlin's calculations, but it nevertheless sent Amin its traditional telegram of congratulations.

These rivalries and purges spread to one of the central pillars of the new regime, the army, exacerbating the crises within its ranks. They weakened the administrative apparatus, already shaken by the abrupt changes of course. They facilitated the attacks of the counterrevolutionaries, as each stage in the crisis led the leadership to strengthen the regime's bureaucratic and authoritarian methods. They aided the counterrevolutionaries' exploitation of the ethnic and religious question, even within the army, a large number of whose troops are of Hazara origin.

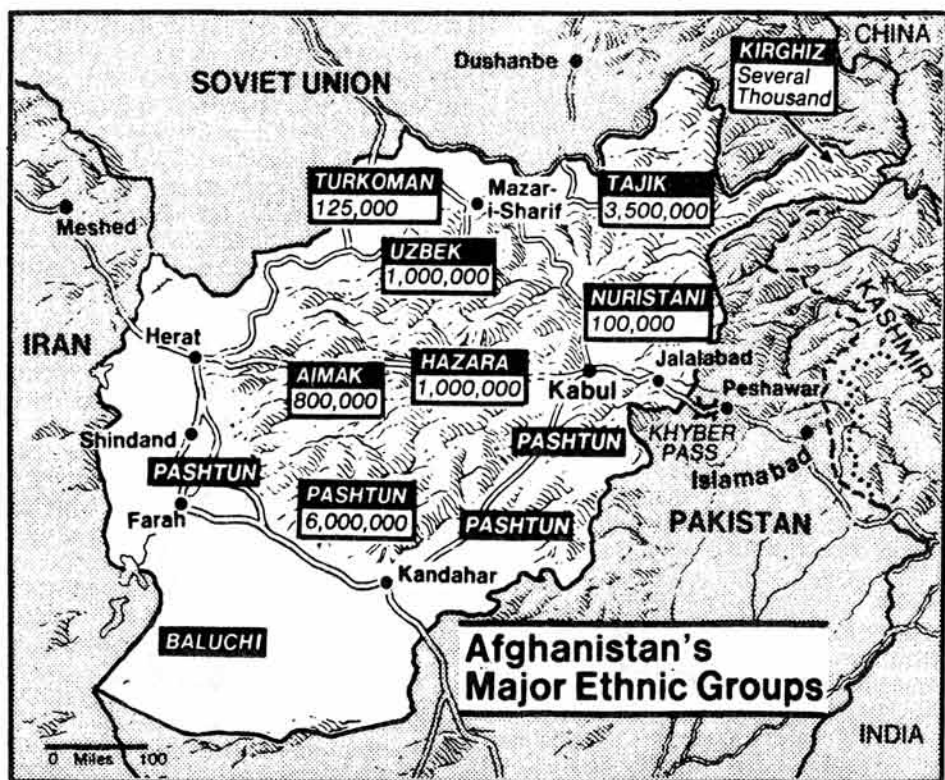
5. In a society like that in Afghanistan, the initiation of progressive reforms by the PDPA was bound to arouse armed resistance from those conservative forces who lived off the exploitation and oppression of the toiling masses and who had previously presided unchallenged over the destinies of one of the most deprived people on earth.

Notwithstanding the petty-bourgeois character of the PDPA leadership, its desire to carry through a "national and democratic revolution," and its methods of carrying out its reform program, the existence of two camps confronting each other in a civil war that has spread since the spring of 1979 expresses the sharp confrontation between the exploited and oppressed classes and the ruling classes.

A coalition of reactionary forces whose real social base was composed of big landowners, tribal chiefs, smugglers, the religious hierarchy, and industrial and commercial capitalists rose up against the new regime. The traditional tribal, clan, and semifeudal ties of dependence between the peasants and the notables made it easier for the latter to build a social base. Islam was employed as an ideological glue to cement these various layers. The fragmented character of the conservative groups fighting against the regime in reality reflects their organization around the tribal chiefs and notables of diverse regions.

Within the reactionary groups based among the Pushtuns we find tribal chiefs who are involved in lucrative smuggling of opium and other goods across the Afghan-Pakistani border (and who view with alarm the regime's efforts to control foreign trade), as well as landowners who owned the most fertile land and best grazing areas, and the royal clan and a sector of the former administration and army.

Other groups, like those among the



to resist all forms of pressure and blackmail from the big landowners and their allies.

Moreover, measures to divide land and eliminate usury cannot be made fully effective unless the rural masses are given access to a system of credit (through a state bank) and distribution network for seed, fertilizer, equipment, and the means for irrigation. A land reform that stops halfway cannot ward off a brutal reaction from the privileged layers, nor can it win over the masses, who may be obliged to continue looking to their former exploiters for seed, credit, and the like.

The orientation and methods of the PDPA thus only add to the objective difficulties facing the implementation of the reforms decreed by the Revolutionary Council. Those objective difficulties include: the limited number of experienced cadres in the rural areas; the scarcity of land, especially in the eastern provinces; the growing sabotage carried out by big landowners; the continued fear among peasants that a change of regime in Kabul would lead to a wave of repression by the landlords; and so on.

extremely brutal factional conflicts. These were exacerbated by the effects of the civil war and the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the reform program. These clashes followed the lines of division between the Khalq and Parcham factions. But they also developed within the Khalq itself. The clashes combined the bureaucracy's own methods of settling internal scores with the methods of traditional conflicts between different clans.

In July 1978, the main leaders of Parcham were pushed aside and relegated to ambassadorial posts abroad. The main Parcham representatives were arrested and then expelled from the party in November 1978, but not before they were compelled to make public confessions.

In August 1978 the "nationalist" officers were dismissed, including Abdul Qader, who had played an important role in the preparation of the coup and had then become the defense minister. More than one had ties with the Parcham.

Hafizullah Amin, the Khalq leader who had formerly been in charge of working with the officers, strengthened his posi-

Nuristanis or the Hazaras, combine resistance to the policy of reforms with ethnic and cultural opposition to a regime that seems predominantly Pushtun.

The propertied classes organized the counterrevolution, in opposition to a series of measures that threatened their interests. They soon received the backing of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, whose governments acted on behalf of imperialism. A sector of the Shi'ite hierarchy in Iran gave their support to the "Islamic resistance."

Since April 1978, Afghanistan has been subjected to threats from American imperialism. Washington was certainly concerned by the consolidation of Soviet influence in Afghanistan, but above all it feared the sociopolitical effects throughout the region of a possible advance of the Afghan revolution, including a revival of the Baluchi movement that could threaten the framework of the Pakistani state and have repercussions in Iran. American imperialism's apprehension grew after the shah of Iran was overthrown in January 1979 by a popular insurrection. In February 1979, Washington cut off all aid to Afghanistan.

American imperialism then moved—with the aid of the European imperialists—to strengthen its position in the region, including Pakistan. Its direct and indirect aid to the reactionary forces in Afghanistan was part of this broader operation and in turn highlighted the class nature of the civil war unfolding within Afghanistan.

6. The Soviet bureaucracy is concerned, above all, with protecting its own power and interests. It therefore places great importance not only on the military defense of the Soviet Union's borders, but also, within the context of its policy of peaceful coexistence, on regional stability.

For the Soviet bureaucrats, the maintenance of control over political and strategic developments in the region and, toward that end, close ties with the existing regimes in Kabul comes before any consideration for the interests of the Afghan masses. Their collaboration with the reactionary governments that preceded Daud, and with Daud himself, is an illustration of this. The Kremlin did not favor any kind of mobilizations to overthrow Daud, who was hitting out at the PDPA and the workers.

The development of anti-imperialist mobilizations and Washington's maneuvers in the region were upsetting the overall balance and compelled the bureaucracy to act to restore its position of influence in this area.

The Soviet bureaucracy did not send its forces into Afghanistan in order to support the mass mobilization, the independent organization of the masses, and the deepening of the revolutionary process. Since April 1978, it has persistently sought "moderate" solutions, pressing for over-

tures to "national sectors." In June 1979 it proposed slowing down the implementation of the land reform.

Nevertheless, the PDPA's policies inevitably led the Kremlin to step up its direct involvement. The Kremlin's forces intervened to support a regime that was weakened by internal dissension at a time when it had to confront a coalition of conservative forces aided by imperialism, and to enable the regime to impose its reforms from above. The only way the Soviet leadership knows how to respond to social and political problems is through military means, increased state and police control, and liquidation of less malleable factions. This orientation did not provide any solution to the regime's crisis; it did not favor organized action by the masses. Ironically, this orientation paved the way for Amin's policies, to which Moscow could only offer tactical criticisms.

Faced with the danger of a collapse of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and a possible victory by the reactionary forces linked to imperialism, Moscow decided to become more deeply involved. It was not prepared to accept the installation of a regime beholden to imperialism on its borders and in a country that had traditionally been under its influence, with all the consequences that would follow, espe-

cially at a time of heightening tensions throughout the region. Moscow did not look forward to the prospect of a chaotic situation of prolonged and spreading civil war. It feared the establishment of another "Islamic Republic" and its repercussions on those populations in the Soviet Union whose ethnic and cultural identities are similar to those of peoples in Afghanistan and Iran.

Beginning on December 24, 1979, the Soviet Union qualitatively increased its military presence in Afghanistan, after having prepared the liquidation of Amin and his replacement by Babrak Karmal.

7. The Soviet bureaucracy decided to intervene (which was only part of its broader policy) the same way it decides all questions—without any regard for the democratic and national sentiments of the oppressed classes and peoples or for whether the working class on a world scale will understand it.

In the case of Afghanistan, this conservative caste was led into a confrontation with a reactionary social bloc supported by imperialism. But in doing so it could not explain to the toiling masses on a world scale that they needed to have their own independent organizations to lead a fight against the landlords, the capitalists, and the imperialists.

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Moreover, the Soviet bureaucracy's denial of the rights of national minorities—and democratic rights in general—meant that Moscow could not provide an example that could rally oppressed masses and thus help break the influence of the "lords" and the mullahs over the poor peasants.

The bureaucracy again had to resort to cynical lies to justify its actions. Today it must claim that Amin—whom it previously supported both while he played a key role under Taraki and while he ruled by himself—had been manipulated by the CIA. It must pretend that it was invited in by a government whose principal figures it then immediately eliminated and replaced with those who had been exiled by its former great friends!

Through all these methods, the bureaucracy threw the world proletariat into great confusion. It was far from aiding the development of the consciousness and organization of the proletariat on an international level. In this respect, the bureaucracy's entire orientation is an obstacle to the advance of the revolution. Objectively, its policy toward the Afghan masses aids those who are trying to use Islam as an ideological weapon to weaken the anti-imperialist dynamic unleashed throughout the region by the Iranian revolution.

Independently of its specific aims, however, the Soviet bureaucracy's intervention places it in a position where it must fight against a reactionary social bloc, a bloc that has no resemblance to a "national liberation movement," but which is struggling to retain its privileges and turn back all the gains of the masses.

Whatever our political opposition to the bureaucracy's overall approach, we must not lose sight of the concrete and important fact that today the bureaucracy is striking—with its own methods—against the counterrevolution. It is dealing a military setback to reaction and imperialism within the country.

Given Afghanistan's position on the Soviet Union's borders and the Soviet intervention in the civil war, the class struggle unfolding in that country immediately takes on an international dimension and is reflected in the current conflict between imperialism and the Soviet Union.

Imperialism, under the guise of preserving "national sovereignty," has acted to defend the landlords and the privileged classes, to break the rise of a liberation movement of the workers and peasants, and to change the strategic situation to the detriment of the Soviet Union.

The new leadership installed by the Soviets includes elements of both the Khalq and Parcham factions, who have a certain amount of credibility among the masses. The regime now includes, side by side, both Babrak Karmal and Aslam Watanjar, an officer who had jailed the ministers of defense and the interior under Taraki.

Will this hasty remodeling allow the leadership to regain enough popular support to both reorganize its army for the struggle against reaction and implement progressive reforms? It is caught in a basic contradiction. On one hand, it wants to appear open to a dialogue with sectors of the opposition and ready to ease up on the social level and reduce its repressive measures. On the other hand, it is based on the massive backing of the Soviet army. That support will certainly make it easier for the government to regain control over whole regions, but it can also be used to create greater unity among the reactionary forces, who are seeking to utilize Afghanistan's long tradition of struggle for independence.

8. Since entering the White House, Carter has been constantly seeking to extract imperialism from the crisis that it was thrown into by the success of the Vietnamese revolution in 1975, a crisis that has been further aggravated by the victory of the Iranian masses and the outbreak of the Nicaraguan revolution.

Recently, the imperialist counteroffensive has focused on two fronts. First of all, using the campaign against the presence of a "Soviet brigade" in Cuba, Washington deployed its troops in the Caribbean as a clear warning to the Nicaraguan revolution. Secondly, it redoubled its propaganda campaign against the rising Iranian revolution at the time the "hostages were seized" at the American embassy, followed by economic pressures and military threats.

Washington, which remains at the head of the greatest military power on earth, is taking advantage of the form the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan took to push its counterattack into a higher gear.

Imperialism's first goal is to turn around public opinion in the United States in order to create a climate making it easier to unleash a military response to preserve existing imperialist positions, to stem the rising tide of revolutionary advances, or even to score some points against certain gains made by the Soviet bureaucracy.

In addition, using a massive propaganda campaign about a Soviet "military danger" and the Kremlin's supposed efforts to obtain "warm water ports," the imperialist governments are seeking to convince the workers of the need for a renewed arms drive, which they have already been pursuing for some time. At the same time that they are launching drastic austerity measures against living standards, the arms build-ups will greatly inflate military budgets, which serve as subsidies for the imperialist monopolies.

The Carter administration is feverishly reorganizing its international military presence, from Europe to the Far East.

Confronted with the developments in Iran and now Afghanistan, it is putting special emphasis on strengthening its naval presence in the Indian Ocean, ac-

quiring new air and naval bases throughout the region, and consolidating a series of regional surrogates, the main ones being Israel, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Pakistan, and Turkey. It aims to take maximum advantage of the formation of an alliance of conservative governments in the "Islamic conference," which was precipitated by the Soviet action in Afghanistan. Carter is even trying to regain a foothold in Iran.

This counterattack is still in its initial stages and it is not certain that it will be successful; the development of the class struggle could yet endanger the position of Sadat, Zia, and the rest.

Washington has also redoubled its efforts to provide new coherence to imperialism's political leadership and to reassert its leading role, which has been battered by the defeats in Indochina and Iran and by the effects of the relative decline of the American economy.

The imperialist governments have likewise carried out reprisals against the Soviet Union, running the gamut from cutting off grain deliveries and the sale of advanced technology to taking steps to boycott the Olympic Games. These initiatives, whatever the obstacles flowing from the differing interests of the various imperialist powers, are basically aimed at compelling the Soviet bureaucracy to alter its course in Afghanistan and to accept a new accord for the maintenance of stability in that region.

Finally, by exploiting Peking's denunciations of "Soviet expansionism," American imperialism has obtained new concessions from the Chinese bureaucracy, which is providing support to the Pakistani dictatorship.

9. a. Revolutionary Marxists support the anti-imperialist demands of the Afghan workers and peasants and the progressive measures taken in their interests by the PDPA. In the civil war under way in Afghanistan—regardless of their criticisms of the policies of the PDPA leadership and the Kremlin—they are in the camp of the toiling masses and fight for their victory over the conservative forces and their imperialist allies.

b. Revolutionists base themselves on the international class struggle and on the independent organization of the workers and peasants, which is totally different from the entire approach of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

They do not take any responsibility for the Kremlin's military intervention. They do not give the slightest political support to this intervention, which flows from the overall policy of the bureaucratic caste. Although the intervention deals blows to the reactionary forces, it does not in the least aim to improve the opportunities for independent action by the masses.

Revolutionary Marxists reject any neutralist attitude in this war. In so far as the Soviet army actually is opposing the ene-

mies of the workers and peasants, they favor its victory over them. To achieve that, the gains of the workers must be consolidated, radical social and democratic steps must be taken, and the Afghan masses must be organized and armed to defend them.

c. The process of permanent revolution can only succeed in Afghanistan through the independent mobilization, action, and organization of the masses. The tanks of the bureaucracy cannot substitute for them. The activity of the masses is absolutely necessary if there is to be a lasting victory against reaction and the creation of conditions for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.

At the moment, there is no sign that the intervention by the "Red Army" is encouraging such a mobilization of the workers against the landlords and capitalists. The Soviets and the PDPA leadership might decide to make compromises, based on considerations related to either the internal situation in Afghanistan or the international situation. Only the independent action and organization of the toiling masses can put a stop to such maneuvers. These compromises would involve renunciation of the implementation and consolidation of the progressive measures, as well as renunciation of the perspective of deepening them in order to fight for a workers and peasants government.

Within this context, if conflicts break out between the "Red Army" and the workers and peasants mobilized to defend their class interests, we will take the side of the latter and explain to the Soviet troops that they should support this struggle.

In the medium and long term, there is one possibility that cannot be excluded beforehand: In a situation where the semi-feudal and bourgeois forces are extremely weak and the presence of Soviet troops becomes prolonged, the fact that the Soviet bureaucracy is rooted in the workers state created by the October revolution could lead it to structurally transform property relations in Afghanistan.

Even if this should take place, our anti-imperialist stance, which would focus on defense of the new property relations, would not involve any support to the Kremlin's political orientation in Afghanistan. We would remain opposed to the annexation of new territory by the Kremlin, to whom we do not entrust any historical mission.

We would struggle for the right of the Afghan workers state to freely choose the forms of its relationship with the other workers states in the region.

d. In the conflict between the reactionary coalition and imperialism on one side and the Soviet troops and the PDPA government on the other, the demand for Afghan national sovereignty in the name of the right of peoples to self-determination would be nothing but a democratic guise for the aims of reaction and imperial-



Leonid Brezhnev greets Noor Mohammad Taraki.

ism. The withdrawal of the Soviet troops would in no way assure any freedom for the Afghan nationalities to decide their own course. It would only open the way for the installation of a reactionary regime oppressing workers and peasants, a regime beholden to Washington, which would consolidate Washington's position in the region.

The road toward real self-determination for the nationalities requires both the defeat of imperialism and the overthrow of the feudal and capitalist exploiters.

That is why we think that those European Communist parties like the Italian and Spanish CPs, which have joined in chorus with the bourgeois governments and the Social Democrats to demand the withdrawal of Soviet troops, are only contributing to the bourgeoisie's international campaign. By doing so, they are showing that good relations with their own bourgeoisies come before any real concern for the lot of the Afghan masses and all the exploited and oppressed people in that part of the world.

e. To choose the camp opposed to imperialism and the reactionary forces does not imply any truce or holy alliance with the Soviet bureaucracy, whose counterrevolutionary orientation discredits socialism, places a major obstacle before the development of the world revolution, and thus weakens the defense of the material basis of the Soviet workers state.

At the same time that we fight against imperialism's initiatives and threats, we continue to call on the workers movement to mobilize against repression in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. We call on the workers to mobilize in defense of civil liberties and of the rights of the nationalities, and for the right of workers to organize on the political and trade-union levels,

independent of the state apparatus. We pursue our struggle for a political revolution and the overthrow of the bureaucracy. We denounce those Communist parties, like in France and Portugal, that support the political methods of the Soviet bureaucracy and the PDPA above the interests of the Afghan workers and peasants and the world proletariat. Their stance logically flows from their bureaucratic policy of dividing the ranks of the workers and collaborating with their own bourgeoisies in their own countries.

f. The prime task of revolutionary Marxists is to:

- oppose the imperialist sanctions, such as the suspension of grain deliveries to the Soviet Union or the cut-off of food aid to Afghanistan by the European Common Market. Denying food to Afghanistan reveals the real contempt of the bourgeois leaders for the fate of the Afghan peoples,

- denounce the numerous attempts at diplomatic blackmail,

- call for mobilizations against the arms drive of Washington and the European, Australian, and Japanese governments,

- demand the withdrawal of all imperialist forces from the region and the dismantling of all their bases,

- condemn the hypocritical propaganda campaign designed to cover up the political and military schemes of Washington and its allies in the Middle East, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, southern Africa, and Central America, which hold the danger of a new war,

- expose the aid given by the imperialist powers to the Afghan counterrevolutionaries and the Pakistani dictatorship,

- oppose the call for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics proposed by Carter, Thatcher, and others.

January 26, 1980

Theses on Afghanistan

[The following resolution was supported by a minority of the United Secretariat.]

* * *

1. The overthrow of the regime of Mohammad Daud in April 1978 marked the opening of a social revolution in Afghanistan.

Civil war developed as reactionary capitalists, landlords, and sections of the clergy organized resistance to the revolution, particularly to the first steps in implementing the agrarian reform. These forces pitted themselves against the workers and peasants, whose interests lie in the development and deepening of the revolution.

The counterrevolution was aided from the beginning by the capitalist military dictatorship in Pakistan and by imperialism, especially U.S. imperialism. This imperialist support was stepped up following the toppling of the shah by the Iranian masses.

The possibility of a victorious proimperialist counterrevolution in Afghanistan poses a threat to the workers state in the USSR. From the outset Moscow provided military aid to the new Afghan regime, and in December 1979 it sent large numbers of Soviet combat troops to aid the war against the exploiting classes and their imperialist backers.

In this civil war, the victory of the government headed by the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), backed by the Soviet troops, over the counterrevolutionary forces would be a blow to imperialism and Afghan reaction. Such a victory corresponds to the interests of the toiling masses of Afghanistan and throughout the world.

2. Behind the current struggle in Afghanistan lie decades of imperialist oppression and exploitation, first by Britain, and after World War II increasingly by the United States. Reduced to semicolonial status, Afghanistan suffered, in a particularly acute form, the abominable conditions of all oppressed nations.

The April 1978 revolution confronted the following situation: only 15 percent of the potential agricultural land was irrigated; illiteracy was 90 percent for men and 95 percent for women; more than 40 percent of the agrarian population, who make up 70 percent of the inhabitants of the country, owned no land and another 40 percent of smallholders lived barely at subsistence level; the country had few reserves against natural disaster—half a million people died in the drought of 1969-72; in a country of 18 million people, only four cities, including Kabul with a population of 750,000, had more than 100,000 inhabitants; there was little industry; the rate of unemployment was more than 20 percent and one million people had been forced to

leave Afghanistan to look for work in the surrounding countries; 14 percent of the population was still nomadic; half of all children died before the age of five, and the average life expectancy was less than 40 years.

Conditions for women were particularly barbaric. Only one in eight children receiving education was female. Of those women who have had some education, only five percent had employment. Reactionary survivals such as the bride price and compulsory wearing of the veil continued to exist.

Major unresolved national questions remained, with traditional Pushtun dominance being exercised over Baluchis, Uzbeks, Turkomans, and others.

3. The landlords and capitalists in Afghanistan proved totally incapable of meeting even the most pressing needs of the country. The attempted reforms of King Amanullah in the early 1920s were first halted and then reversed with his overthrow in 1929.

The Daud government, ushered in with the overthrow of the monarchy in July 1973, proved equally incapable of resolving the problems facing the country. After initially promising broad reforms that were never carried out, Daud allowed the royal family (of which he was a member) to continue to dominate the country. The king and his family continued to receive revenues, the army remained dominated by the old officers from the monarchist regime, no land reform was implemented, political parties were suppressed, and later major repression was directed against organizations of the working class, mainly the PDPA.

The Daud regime was riddled with corruption and inefficiency, with estimates that only half the funds of the post-1975 economic "plan" were actually used for any useful purposes. Afghanistan was increasingly weighed down by foreign debt. In face of the deepening social crisis Daud moved toward establishing closer links with the shah of Iran and American imperialism, and then with the reactionary regime of General Zia ul-Haq in Pakistan. SAVAK advisers were used to build up his political police.

By the beginning of 1978, Afghanistan faced a situation where the Daud regime could not show any way forward, and was increasingly opting for more direct reliance on imperialism, the chief prop of reaction in the country.

4. The assassination of Mir Akbar Khyber, a prominent PDPA leader, on April 17, 1978, provoked an immediate and angry response, with more than 15,000 people attending his funeral in protest. Demonstrations continued during the following days. Daud responded by arresting many of the PDPA leaders and launching

a general crackdown against oppositionists.

In response to the regime's repressive moves, and basing themselves on the antigovernment upsurge, the PDPA succeeded in utilizing a section of the army to topple Daud and establish a new regime. The new government purged most of the top military leadership and the governmental apparatus, and announced a 30-point reform program in the interests of the workers and peasants, which it began to take steps towards implementing.

One of the most important of these social measures was the land reform that began to be put into effect on January 1, 1979. This set a ceiling on land ownership, with all land over that limit being expropriated without compensation and distributed free to landless peasants and nomads. According to the government, the first phase of this program was completed in June 1979 when land had been distributed to about a quarter of a million families. In addition, all debts owed by peasants to landlords were cancelled.

Other progressive measures taken by the PDPA government included the construction of new schools and medical centers, a mass literacy campaign in which hundreds of thousands were enrolled, and the legalization of trade unions for the first time in Afghanistan's history.

The new regime also began to take steps concerning two of the most pressing problems facing the Afghan masses: the oppression of women and the rights of Afghanistan's oppressed national minorities. Special measures were taken to improve the status of women, including mandatory schooling for young women, offering special courses to married women, abolition of child marriages, and reduction of dowries. Steps were taken to overcome the oppression of Afghanistan's national minorities fostered by previous regimes. These included publishing newspapers, broadcasting radio programs, and conducting education in Uzbek, Baluchi, and Nuristani.

These and other progressive measures, such as the release of 8,000 political prisoners, won the new regime popular support. Indications of this even found their way into the imperialist press. For example, the January 16, 1979 *Wall Street Journal* reported that when the PDPA government changed the country's flag, "more than 150,000 persons [in Kabul] . . . marched to honor the new flag on the day it was first unfurled. Similar demonstrations of support occurred in other cities. The marches were organized, but witnesses say that the participants appeared genuinely enthusiastic."

Initial steps toward mass organization led by the PDPA were taken, including the establishment of women's and youth groups, trade unions, and local armed defense committees to guard against counterrevolutionary attacks.

Contrary to lies in the bourgeois press

that what had occurred in Afghanistan was merely a "Soviet engineered coup" that "imposed" reforms on a hostile population, the facts show that a genuine social revolution, in the interests of the workers and peasants, had begun to unfold in Afghanistan after April 1978.

5. Those who benefit from oppression and exploitation in Afghanistan—capitalists, landlords, usurers, opium growers and merchants, smugglers, former military officers, monarchists, and sectors of the religious hierarchy—responded to these progressive and popular measures by launching a counterrevolutionary guerrilla war against the PDPA government. Their rebellion began in earnest in early 1979 after the land reform was initiated.

The reactionary rebellion is centered in those areas where opium is the principal crop, primarily along the borders with Pakistan. Opium field owners and smugglers, threatened by the land reform and measures taken against the opium trade, have used the proceeds from their dirty business to finance the counterrevolutionary military drive.

The right-wing guerrilla forces claim they are leading a Muslim "Holy War" against "atheistic communists," attempting to capitalize on the anti-imperialist upsurge of the world's Islamic peoples. The capitalist media internationally echoes the same line. The lie is given to this by the reactionaries' alliance with imperialism and their denunciation of the anti-imperialist struggle in Iran.

Furthermore, nearly all Afghans are Muslims, including those supporting the government. The government has taken no measures restricting the freedom of religion, and many leading mullahs support the regime. The characterization of the civil war as one of "Muslims" against "atheists" is purely demagogic cover for the exploiters' class war against the exploited and oppressed.

From the outset, U.S. imperialism has taken a hostile approach to the PDPA government and its radical measures, especially after the Iranian revolution removed its loyal ally in Tehran. It fears the repercussions of the Afghan revolution will inspire oppressed peoples throughout the region, threatening imperialist interests there. The Carter administration immediately took steps aimed at trying to strangle and set back the Afghan revolution.

A propaganda campaign was launched in the capitalist press sounding the alarm about the threat posed by the revolution.

A special meeting was held at the NATO Atlantic Command in June 1978, in Annapolis, Maryland, to consider what to do.

American officials cut off all new economic aid in February 1979 and tried to block loans by international financial agencies to Afghanistan.

Along with the Pakistani dictatorship, Washington sought out and aided counterrevolutionary forces that could be used

against the government in Kabul. They operated through institutions that have close relations with the CIA, such as the Asia Foundation and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (which also has special ties with the opium growers and dealers). One central leader of the Afghan counterrevolution, Zia Nassry, is an American citizen, who held discussions with U.S. State Department officials in March 1979 before leaving the U.S. to join the counterrevolution.

6. The geographical position of Afghanistan in Central Asia, with its long borders with Iran, Pakistan, and the USSR, and its national groupings that overlap into the surrounding countries, have long made it a focus of international struggles. British imperialism sought control of Afghanistan in order to safeguard the northern borders of its Indian Empire and to pressure Russia. To this end, it waged three major wars against Afghanistan. Following the Russian Revolution, this policy was part of imperialist efforts to intervene against and then contain and encircle the Soviet Union.

After World War II, the United States unsuccessfully attempted, through a combination of threats and "aid," to integrate Afghanistan into the Baghdad Pact. These threats included support for the Pakistani regime's policies against the Pushtun minority and a partial economic blockade in 1960-63 exercised through the closing of the Pakistani border, which was only broken through a Soviet and Indian airlift.

Washington's moves with the Daud regime and its current intervention in support of the reactionary forces in Afghanistan reflect not only imperialism's drive to smash the Afghan workers and peasants but also its long-standing goal of creating a pliant proimperialist regime, including the capability of providing military bases aimed at the USSR and the colonial revolution throughout the region.

7. With the rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union, representing the interests of the privileged bureaucratic caste, Soviet relations with Afghanistan became determined not by the overall interests of the toiling masses in Afghanistan and throughout the world, as they were in the early years of the USSR under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, but in the counterrevolutionary framework of "socialism in one country." The aim of the Soviet bureaucracy was to create a "neutral" capitalist regime in Afghanistan that would not become a military base for imperialism aimed at the USSR. To this end, starting in the 1950s, the Kremlin signed major trade and military agreements with Afghanistan, but raised no serious protests concerning the reactionary internal policies of the various Afghan regimes or the social conditions of the masses. Moscow pushed the PDPA toward accommodation with "peaceloving" national bourgeois forces.

This relationship began to be undermined on the one hand when Washington got Daud to take his distance from Moscow in the mid-1970s and take steps towards closer relations with imperialism and its client states in the region. Then, on the other hand, the 1978 overturn, which was not instigated or planned by Moscow, and the growing imperialist-backed counterrevolution, further upset the "peaceful coexistence" appellation.

Faced with this new situation, the Soviet government responded to appeals for aid from the PDPA government by signing dozens of new economic agreements and sending military advisers and equipment. Military aid was increased as the counterrevolution got under way and began to gather strength.

The struggle to carry through a major land reform and other measures, as well as to organize to fight the imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary military offensive, would be a formidable challenge even for a revolutionary leadership. But the PDPA is a Stalinist party with the Stalinist class-collaborationist program.

The PDPA undermined the wide popularity of its initial measures by its hesitations and its bureaucratic methods. Fearing initiatives by the masses that could escape its control, the PDPA was not able to involve the workers and peasants in the revolutionary process to the extent possible and necessary. Torn by savage factionalism and repressive purges, and not having won the broad base among the masses—especially outside the cities—that its progressive measures could have gained it, the PDPA's ability to wage the most effective struggle against the counterrevolution was undercut. This was a factor in helping the imperialist-bolstered counterrevolution to gain ground.

It was in this context that Moscow decided to send tens of thousands of Soviet combat troops into Afghanistan. The Kremlin judged that there was danger of a successful counterrevolution that would threaten the workers state in the Soviet Union, thereby endangering the interests of the Soviet bureaucratic caste itself, which are dependent upon the existence and preservation of the nationalized and planned economy in the USSR.

Some bourgeois journalists have advanced the view that the Kremlin sent troops into Afghanistan out of fear that the civil war there would create discontent among Muslims and oppressed nationalities in the Soviet Union living near the Afghan border. The qualitatively superior living standards and level of social gains in Soviet Central Asia would tend to argue against such a view. The idea that Soviet Asians would be attracted by the Afghan rightists' appeals to "Islam" is refuted by Moscow's confidence in sending a preponderance of troops from these nationalities as part of its military forces in Afghanistan.

The immediate consequence of the mas-

sive entry of Soviet combat troops into Afghanistan is to significantly reinforce the fight against the counterrevolution. However, this does not mean that the Soviet bureaucracy has changed its class-collaborationist foreign policy. To the contrary, the bureaucratic caste approaches all questions from the standpoint of defending its own privileges and parasitic interests.

But this policy of class collaboration is not carried out simply through direct support of Washington and counterrevolutionary forces. To protect their position against imperialism, the Soviet bureaucracy seeks points of support among the workers and peasants.

This includes not only unprincipled support to the programs of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships, but on occasion vitally needed economic and military aid to other workers states, anti-imperialist movements, and governments in conflict with imperialism.

Revolutionists don't oppose such aid—they oppose the class-collaborationist policy of the Kremlin.

When the interests of the bureaucracy and those of the working people temporarily and partially coincide, as they do in the need to defend the Soviet workers state from counterrevolutionary threats, the Kremlin poses and resolves the problem, like all others, absolutely independently of the interests and even the ideas and feelings of the international working class.

In Afghanistan this was shown by the bureaucratic removal and killing of Hafizullah Amin, charging him with being a CIA agent, and his replacement as president with Babrak Karmal, as well as by the failure to mobilize world working class opinion against the counterrevolutionary danger in Afghanistan. These methods have played into imperialism's hand, helping it sow confusion concerning its real role and aims.

But it is not the use of Soviet military power to aid the struggle against the reactionary forces that is an obstacle to the development of the revolution in Afghanistan—this is progressive, regardless of the motivations of the Kremlin—but rather Moscow's overall counterrevolutionary class-collaborationist policies in Afghanistan and internationally.

The complete crushing of the counterrevolution requires the carrying through of the progressive social and political measures already begun and propelling them forward to the expropriation of the capitalists and the establishment of a workers state.

In advancing the interests of the workers and peasants, the most effective means are the independent mobilization and organization of the masses. Moscow and the PDPA will try to control any such independent initiatives of the masses and try to restrict their full participation.

But no matter what bureaucratic policies

are pursued by the PDPA and the Soviet bureaucracy, there can be no step forward for the workers and peasants of Afghanistan without the crushing of the counterrevolution. Victories against the reactionary forces can encourage the masses to carry



HAFIZULLAH AMIN

forward the struggle for their interests.

8. Some organizations in the working-class movement, under imperialist pressure, have condemned the Soviet Union's use of troops in Afghanistan. This position is held by the Communist parties of Italy, Spain, Mexico, Britain, and Australia among others, and by the Social Democratic parties.

The Peking bureaucracy, echoed by the Maoist groups internationally, has not only condemned the Soviet action and lined up with the imperialist campaign, but is promising imperialism that it will increase its aid to the dictatorship in Pakistan.

All these forces have aligned themselves on the reactionary side of a civil war being waged against the most elementary interests of the Afghan workers and peasants, and with imperialism against the Soviet workers state. For these forces, their class-collaborationist relations with imperialism are much more important to them than the fact that the masses of Afghanistan would be condemned to savage repression and continued misery by the victory of the counterrevolution in Afghanistan.

The charge that Afghanistan's "self-determination" has been violated by the Soviet troops is hypocritical to the core. It is the imperialists and not the Soviet Union who have been oppressing Afghanistan for decades and who helped keep it in a state of backwardness and underdevelopment. The victory of the counterrevolution-

ary forces would result, not in the "self-determination" of Afghanistan, but in its even more direct domination by imperialism. Furthermore, such a position amounts to a refusal to recognize the present PDPA government as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, since this government is in favor of the aid from the Soviet troops.

Another false argument is that the Soviet intervention will throw the Afghan masses into the arms of reaction. This assumes that Afghan nationalists would prefer a Chile- or Indonesia-style reactionary takeover to the Soviet presence. It assumes further that peasants will support their landlords, workers their capitalist bosses, and that the oppressed will rally to the proimperialist forces simply because Soviet troops are in the country. This flies in the face of the laws of the class struggle.

The real issue for the masses the world over is to fight to defeat the counterrevolutionary attempt by imperialism to block and overturn the advances by the workers and peasants of Afghanistan and instead install a counterrevolutionary proimperialist regime. By adding their voices to the capitalist propaganda campaign against the Soviet Union, these CPs, Social Democrats, and Maoists not only knifed the Afghan workers and peasants in the back but have once again betrayed the workers in their own countries.

If the Soviet Union were forced by imperialism to withdraw its troops, this would greatly encourage the counterrevolutionary forces and would likely lead to their victory. The most reactionary and proimperialist elements in Afghan society would take the helm, brutally repressing the demoralized masses and setting back their struggle for a whole period. Imperialism would secure a base in the area. Afghanistan would become a bulwark of imperialist counterrevolution, aimed at the Soviet Union, the Iranian revolution (which would be among the first to bear the brunt of the wrath of the newly strengthened imperialist presence), and the oppressed masses in the area in general. This would signify a major blow to the world revolution, would embolden imperialism, and would thus increase the danger of war.

The role of the Soviet combat troops in the Afghan civil war has been to aid the struggle against the counterrevolution. A defeat of the reactionary forces would remove an obstacle to the struggle of the workers and peasants to deepen their revolution, and would be a significant blow to imperialist policies in the area.

This would have positive repercussions in the struggle of the Pakistani masses against the dictatorship there. This can already be seen in the recent demonstrations of Baluchis in Pakistan supporting the Soviet action. It would weaken the reactionary forces in Iran, denying them a solid bulwark of imperialist and reactionary support, and therefore strengthen the struggles of the workers and peasants

fighting to extend the revolution there. By reinforcing another battleground against imperialism it would aid anti-imperialist struggles everywhere, from Indochina to Nicaragua.

It would also make it more difficult for imperialism to use its immense military power against the toiling masses internationally, or against the Soviet Union and the other workers states. This would help buy precious time for the working class worldwide—especially in the United States—to disarm the imperialist warmakers.

A defeat of the counterrevolutionary forces in Afghanistan would signify a further shift in the world relationship of class forces to the detriment of imperialism.

Therefore, the stakes in this struggle are high. Condemning the use of Soviet troops—whether from conscious class-collaborationist motives, such as is the case with those CPs that have done so, the Social Democrats, or the Maoists, or from political confusion—is to aid the counterrevolution and imperialism.

9. U.S. imperialism has mounted a massive propaganda campaign designed to disorient the working class around the world. It is attempting to cover up the real nature of the civil war in Afghanistan and the extent of Washington's involvement.

It is whipping up anticommunist opposition to the Soviet Union for sending troops and is trying to win support for the demand that they be withdrawn.

This is all aimed at creating a climate



more favorable to getting acceptance from American working people for the use of U.S. combat forces against the struggles of the oppressed throughout the world.

Washington and its allies have also responded to the Soviet Union's use of troops in Afghanistan with stepped up military aid to the Afghan rightists and

the military dictatorship in Pakistan. They have taken punitive measures against the USSR and Afghanistan and increased their war preparations. Included among these measures are:

- suspension of grain shipments and other trade to the USSR;
- diverting food shipments of international relief organizations headed for Afghanistan to counterrevolutionary camps in Pakistan;
- threatened boycott of the 1980 World Olympic Games in Moscow;
- attempt to reintroduce the draft in the U.S.;
- further expansion of imperialist war budgets;
- discussion about establishing new military bases in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.

The key task of the Fourth International must be to combat this reactionary offensive by conducting a campaign to reach the working class with the truth about the war in Afghanistan and Washington's counterrevolutionary role. We should participate in and help initiate protests against the measures taken by the U.S. imperialists and their allies against the Afghan revolution and the USSR. We must seek to convince the working class of the world that it is in its own vital interests to defend the Afghan revolution. □

Draft Resolution on the Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan

[The following resolution was supported by a minority of the United Secretariat.]

* * *

1. The first task of revolutionary Marxists in regard to the events that are unfolding in Afghanistan is to denounce the hypocrisy of the reactionary imperialist propaganda campaign, which is using the pretext of the Soviet troop intervention in Kabul to call for a struggle against "atheistic communism," "Soviet imperialism," and other scarecrows constantly brandished by the world bourgeoisie. In particular, revolutionary Marxists must warn the workers of all countries, and especially those in the imperialist countries, of the real objective of this propaganda campaign. Its aim is nothing other than to prepare the conditions for new imperialist aggressions against popular struggles.

2. Nonetheless, the fact remains that countering the imperialist propaganda should not take the place, in and of itself, of a political position. While revolutionary Marxists unconditionally defend the Soviet Union against imperialism, they are not at all obliged to defend every action undertaken by the Soviet bureaucracy, be they progressive or anti-imperialist in their stated motivations. In the case of Afghanistan, the workers movement is confronted

with one of the thorniest problems of the class struggle, that of the right of nations to self-determination. It is useful to recall the position of the Bolsheviks on this subject. Lenin led long battles on this question, including in 1919 when he polemicized against those who wanted to restrict the nations' right to self-determination, using the nature of their leadership as a criterion, to the point of granting the right only to nations run by their workers.

We cannot deny [the right of self-determination] to a single one of the peoples living within the boundaries of the former Russian Empire. . . . What, then, can we do in relation to such peoples as the Kirghiz, the Uzbeks, the Tajiks, the Turkmen, who to this day are under the influence of their mullahs? . . . Can we approach these peoples and tell them that we shall overthrow their exploiters? We cannot do this, because they are entirely subordinated to their mullahs. In such cases we have to wait until the given nation develops, until the differentiation of the proletariat from the bourgeois elements, which is inevitable, has taken place. . . .

Now Scheidemann's party is already saying that we want to conquer Germany. That is of course ridiculous, nonsensical. But the bourgeoisie have their own interests and their own press, which is shouting this to the whole world in hundreds of millions of copies; Wilson, too, is supporting this in his own interests. The Bol-

sheviks, they declare, have a large army, and they want, by means of conquest, to implant their Bolshevism in Germany. . . . We must arrange things so that the German traitor-socialists will not be able to say that the Bolsheviks are trying to impose their universal system, which, as it were, can be brought into Berlin on Red Army bayonets. And this is what may happen if the principle of the self-determination of nations is denied. . . .

Communism cannot be imposed by force. . . . (Lenin, "Report on the Party Program," presented to the Eighth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, March 19, 1919).

However, the position of revolutionary Marxists has never been to raise the democratic principle of the right of nations to self-determination into an absolute principle. This right remains dependent upon the class-struggle interests of the world proletariat. It can be legitimately, but temporarily, bypassed in the case where a workers state is forced to act out of consideration of self-defense. Nevertheless, and even in such a case, it is necessary to act with the greatest caution. It is in light of these premises that we must examine the Afghanisthan affair.

3. Without a doubt, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan is being carried out in gross violation of the right of peoples to self-determination. It is, in fact, well known that the Soviet troops themselves

overthrew Amin in order to replace him by Karmal, who they brought from exile with them. It is also a well-known fact that there is no qualitative difference between the regimes of Taraki, Amin, and Karmal, each of which has been supported in turn by the Kremlin. The recent release of prisoners by the Karmal regime does not constitute evidence to the contrary. Moreover, it did not succeed in winning popular sympathy for Karmal, since the fact of his having been imposed from the outside has alienated him from the Afghan people. On the other hand, the imperialist support to the Afghan "mujahedeen" led by feudal-religious reactionaries, has never reached proportions comparable to that of the Soviet support to Kabul, even before the direct intervention of the Kremlin's troops. Imperialism's support to the Afghan rebels never attained the dimensions of outside intervention that would have justified the intervention of Soviet troops, despite the claims of the Kremlin leaders.

If indeed, however, the Kabul regime were really threatened with being overthrown by the "mujahedeen," the only correct way to prevent such an outcome would have been to urge the regime to abandon its methods of military dictatorship and to seek to base itself on a mobilization of the masses around their own interests while promoting their independent organization into Soviets. Such a policy would be, as we know, the opposite of that being followed by the Stalinist bureaucracy, whose aim is to generalize their own methods. To state that a seizure of power in Kabul by reactionaries would have constituted a serious threat to the security of the Soviet Union is, moreover, totally ridiculous.

4. Condemning the intervention of Soviet troops in Afghanistan does not resolve, however, the problem of what attitude to adopt toward these troops. It is in fact possible to hold the position that in light of this "fait accompli," to demand the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops would be in the interests of the reactionaries and of imperialism. We, for our part, maintain just the opposite.

A prolonged presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan can only fuel the following tendencies:

a. The tendency that the Afghan rebellion will increase in strength and popularity, profiting from the national Afghan resentment against Soviet intervention and from imperialist support using this intervention as a pretext. The Kremlin is in the process of getting bogged down in a war that it can never complete, inasmuch as it is completely illusory to try to wipe out guerrilla forces in a mountainous country when they have in addition two bases of support at their disposal—Pakistan and Iran. The logic of such a "counterinsurgency" operation is permanent enlargement of the combat zone and incursion

into the territories serving as bases of support for the guerrillas.

b. The reactionary, anticommunist tendency of the Islamic movement throughout the Muslim world. Reactionaries in the



BABRAK KARMAL

Muslim countries have today seized upon the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan to orchestrate an uproar against "atheistic communism," which is presented as the kind of regime the Soviet Union wants to impose by force on the Muslim peoples. Washington and its allies are counting on the Afghanistan affair to reverse the dominant anti-Western orientation imprinted on the Islamic movement by the affair of the American hostages in Tehran. In addition, the campaign can have repercussions inside the Soviet Union itself, where bureaucratic oppression of the nationalities creates ideal conditions for this.

c. The imperialists' justification for their resumption of the arms race, under the pretext that the Soviet Union is demonstrating in Afghanistan that it intends to use force to impose regimes loyal to it. The Afghanistan affair has already made a shambles of the efforts of the workers movement in the imperialist countries against the step-up of the nuclear arsenal in Europe and the West. It has helped dissipate the paralyzing effects of the Vietnam War on the capacities of American imperialism to carry out foreign military intervention. It has also helped disorient the antibureaucratic opposition in the workers states.

5. In this context, it is imperative that the Soviet troops withdraw from Afghanistan immediately and that the Kremlin recognize the right of self-determination for the people of this country, thus repairing the wrong caused by its intervention into the permanent revolution in Afghani-

stan and in the entire region. The possibility of the Muslim rebels taking power in Kabul—which is in no way inevitable—is, on the whole, much less harmful to world revolution than a prolonged war by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

Revolutionary Marxists must take part in and promote actions by the anti-imperialist and workers movement to press the Soviet Union to immediately withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. In doing this, they must oppose all characterization of the Soviet Union as imperialist. They must also fulfill their duty of solidarity with the antifeudal and anti-imperialist Afghan forces, explaining that the demand for the withdrawal of Soviet troops should in no way be confused with support to the "mujahedeen." Revolutionary Marxists will in this way have the opportunity to explain the difference between their conception of socialism and that of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

January 27, 1980

Corrections

The special supplement of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* containing documents of the 1979 World Congress of the Fourth International inadvertently omitted the vote totals on two of the Indochina Resolutions. Only an indicative vote of delegates and fraternal observers was taken on this agenda point.

The document "The Sino-Indochinese Crisis" on page 184 was submitted by a majority of the United Secretariat and the vote was: 56.5 for, 42.5 against, 11 abstentions, and 3 not voting. The document "Advances in Indochinese Revolution and Imperialism's Response" on page 194 was submitted by a minority of the United Secretariat and the vote was: 30.5 for, 72 against, 7.5 abstentions, and 3 not voting.

* * *

William Gottlieb asks that we note the following correction to his article, "World Revolution, War Spending Send Gold Soaring," in the February 4 issue. The sentence, on page 91, "Writing about the relationship between hard currency and paper money in *Capital*, Marx explained:" should have read, "Writing about the relationship between hard cash (gold) and other commodities in *Capital*, Marx explained:"

* * *

In Ernest Mandel's article, "Behind the Soaring Price of Gold" in the February 11 issue, the term "price of production" was incorrectly translated as "cost of production" toward the top of the middle column of page 123.

Pro-Abortion Forces March and Rally in Britain

By Janice Lynn

Thirty thousand women's rights supporters, trade unionists, and students demonstrated at the British Parliament February 5 to protest legislation that would severely restrict Britain's current abortion law. Last October, 40,000 had turned out to protest this antiwoman measure in a demonstration sponsored by the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Britain's central labor federation.

Known as the Corrie Bill, the legislation would reduce the time limit for abortions from the present twenty-eight weeks to twenty weeks of pregnancy; tighten the criteria for performing abortions within those twenty weeks; and place restrictions on clinics and physicians that would reduce the number of abortions by half or more.

If the Corrie Bill is passed, an estimated 100,000 women a year may be forced to turn to the back streets.

The February 14 issue of *Socialist Challenge*, newspaper of the International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International, reports that a petition signed by more than 200,000 opponents of the Corrie Bill was presented to members of Parliament, reflecting the majority pro-abortion sentiment in Britain. The petitions were packed into boxes that advertised various brands of gin (in Britain, a myth was widely propagated that

drinking a bottle of gin in a hot bath would provoke miscarriage).

Following the demonstration, several thousand women and their supporters rallied in Central Hall, Westminster. *Socialist Challenge* reports:

Many of those who attended had taken time off work to be there. There were speakers from almost every labour movement, women's and medical organisation imaginable. There were speakers from the TUC and from the leaderships of several major trade unions.

Labour member of Parliament Tony Benn pointed to the Corrie Bill and other attacks on women's position in society as linked to the attacks on the working class as a whole.

On February 8 the Corrie Bill was debated inside the packed House of Commons chamber. Women in the public gallery unfurled a pro-abortion banner, but

were hustled away by the doorkeepers. Outside, demonstrators chanted, "Not the church, not the state, women must decide their fate."

Opponents of the bill again assembled inside Central Hall to await a report on what happened in Parliament. Labour Party MP Jo Richardson arrived and explained there had been no vote on the Corrie Bill—an important setback for proponents of the Bill. More than 5,000 women then assembled for a torchlight march through central London.

Socialist Challenge reporter Jude Woodward points out that although the consensus now seems that the Bill will "not make it on to the Statute book, this is no time for the pro-choice movement to sit back." She warns that the Tory cabinet might introduce its own restrictive Bill and "the pro-choice movement will have its work cut out to prevent it." □

Abortion Rights Victory in United States

In a significant victory for women's rights, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the federal government to begin paying for abortions. This February 19 decision reflects the deep majority sentiment in the United States that safe, legal abortion is every woman's right.

Since 1976 women have been denied federally funded abortions by the Hyde Amendment. Prior to that, about 300,000 abortions yearly had been paid for by Medicaid following the 1973 ruling legalizing most abortions. Since passage of the reactionary amendment, only 2,000 a year have been financed.

Under the Hyde Amendment low-paid women workers, unemployed women on welfare, and teenage women are denied equal rights—access to a vital medical procedure—simply because they cannot pay.

Black women and Latinas—the lowest paid workers—bear the brunt of this law.

Those women who were turned away had to seek back-alley abortions, try to abort themselves with quinine or coat hangers, or bear an unwanted child.

Medicaid funding has now been temporarily resumed, but the fight is not over. Antiabortion forces in the government are still fighting to take away the funds once again.

The Supreme Court is expected to begin hearings on the constitutionality of the

Hyde Amendment in April and make a decision by June.

On January 15, federal district court Judge John Dooling, Jr., had ruled that the Hyde Amendment was unconstitutional stating, "To deny necessary medical assistance for the lawful and medically necessary procedure of abortion is to violate the pregnant woman's First and Fifth Amendment rights."

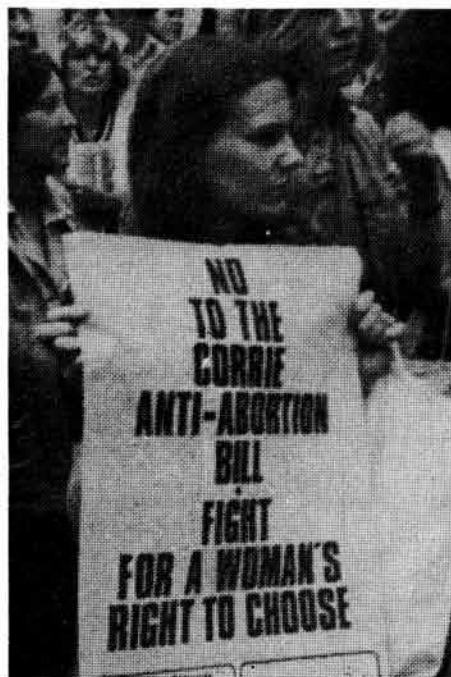
It is now up to the Supreme Court to make the final ruling.

Socialist Workers Party vice-presidential candidate Matilde Zimmermann stated:

"The resumption of funding of Medicaid abortions can be a turning point in the struggle to overturn the Hyde Amendment. It should be a signal to the National Organization for Women, other women's rights groups, and the labor movement to join forces to ensure the defeat of this law. . . .

"Unions have already begun to speak out for affirmative action, pregnancy disability benefits, and the Equal Rights Amendment. Abortion rights for all should be added to this list of issues fundamental to the interests of the labor movement. . . .

"In the next crucial months the voice of the majority must be heard, so we can deal a final death blow to the Hyde Amendment and consign it to the dust bin of history." □



British abortion rights demonstration.